

Jersey Beat

15th Anniversary Issue!

#59

Spring '97

\$2

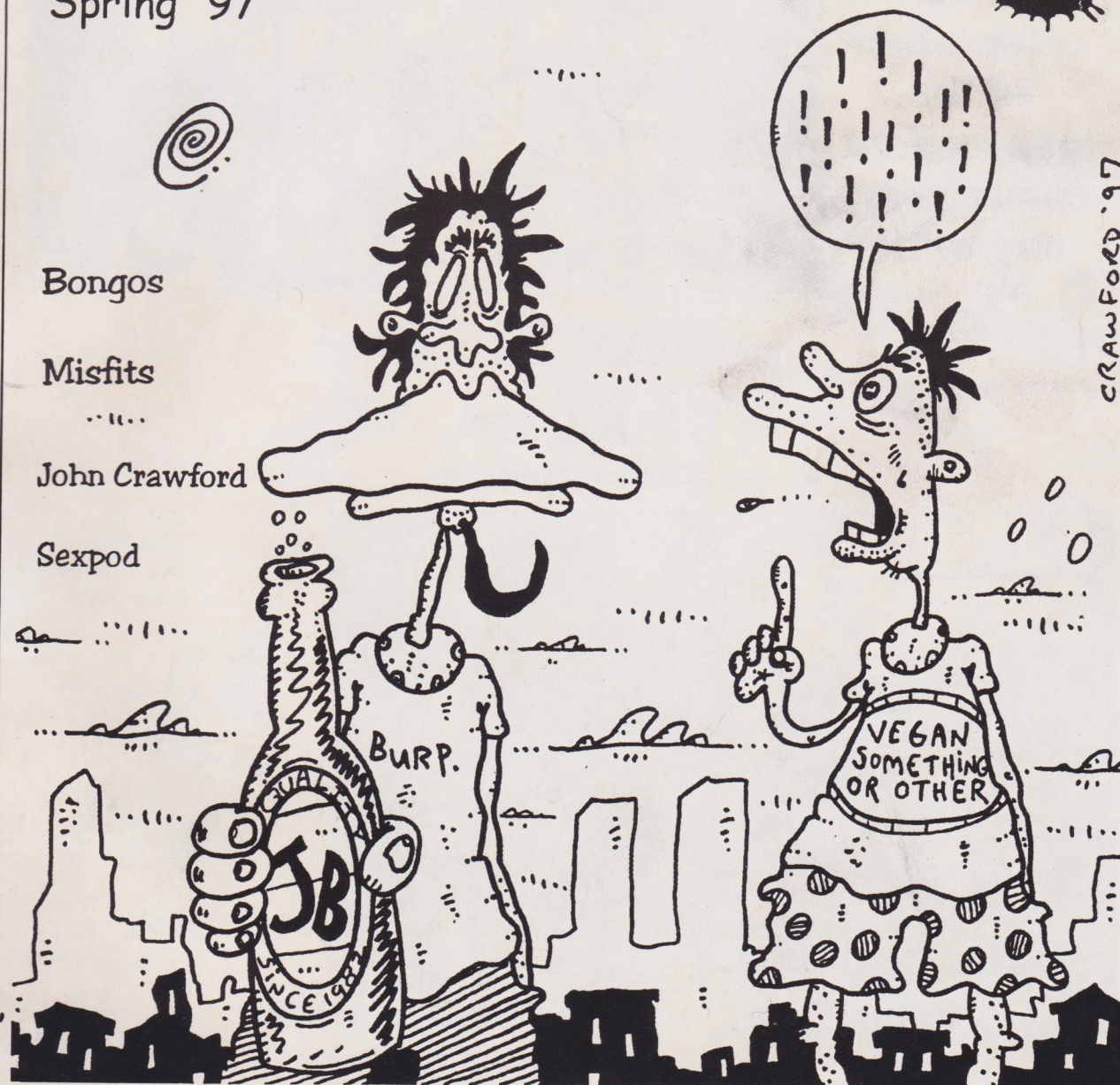
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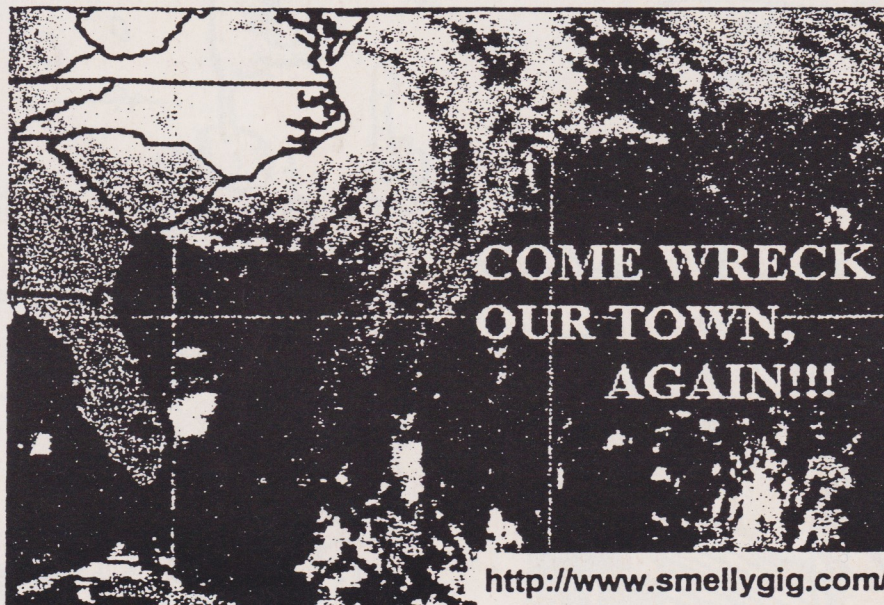
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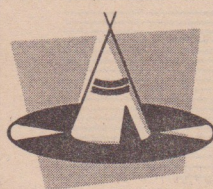
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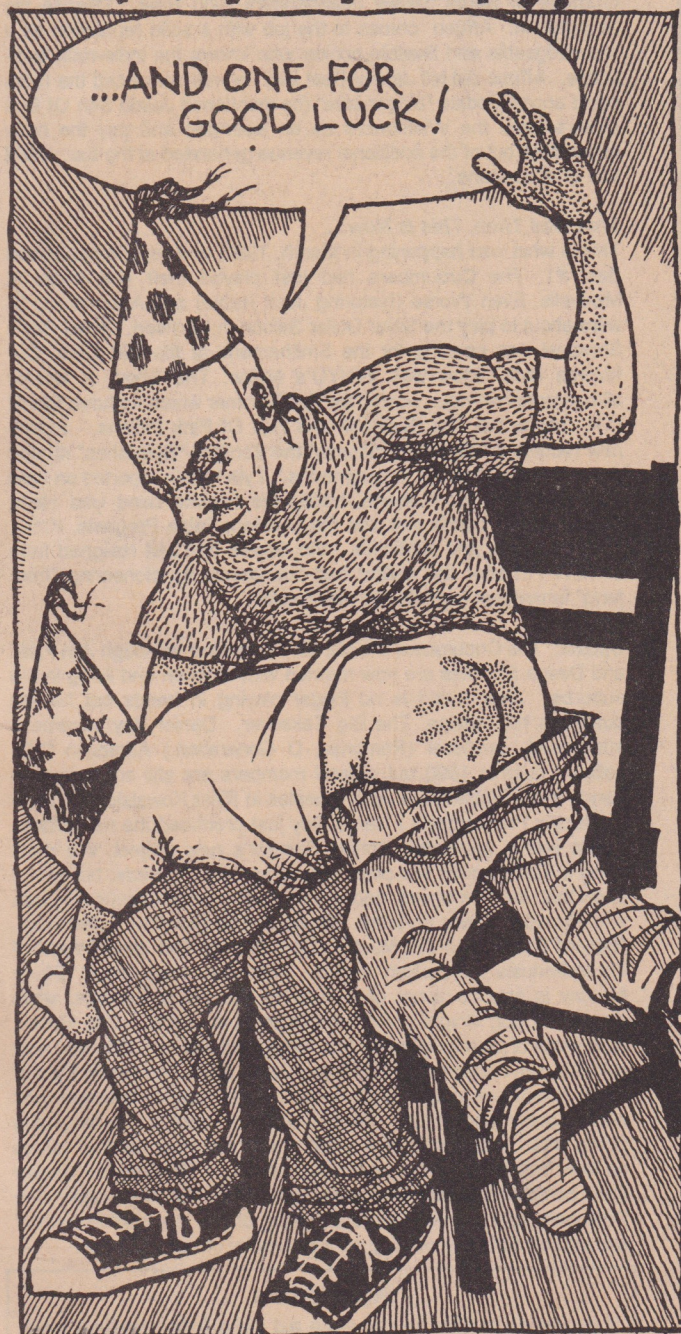
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anniversary!

Jersey Beat

Issue #59

Spring 1997



JERSEY BEAT★

Jim Testa,

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REVIEW POLICY:

'You try to play it, we try to like it.'

Jersey Beat is published whenever we feel like it, usually three times a year. We accept CD's, vinyl LP's, demo tapes, fanzines, books, and videos for review. 7 inches are reviewed in our sister publication, GLUT. Due to the ridiculous amount of crap that we receive in the mail every day, we cannot guarantee a review, even if you buy a big ad. You are more than welcome to call to check up on your mailings to us, but I probably won't call you back unless I haven't received your package or I need more information for an article or review. Yes, we do interview bands but almost never because they ask us to. If we publish a review, don't worry, we'll send a tearsheet. Sending \$2 with your demo tape won't get you a copy of the review any faster. If you have any questions about any of the above, talk to me. - Jim Testa

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Late Breaking News

More Maxwells News...

Jodi Hamm, who took over booking shows at Maxwells after the departure of Todd Abramson on January 1, was unceremoniously fired the first week of March and replaced by Rob Affuso, onetime drummer of South Jersey headbangers Skid Row. Despite his background, Affuso comes to the job with a solid reputation as a knowledgeable and likeable booker who knows the indie-rock landscape. Affuso did tell Jersey Beat that he was convinced the room could accommodate "bigger acts" (he mentioned Jakob Son Of Bob Dylan's band the Wallflowers as an example) and pay the hefty guarantees out of the additional revenue generated at the bar. We'll see what happens...

That Was Then, This Is Now...

This is what was happening in March, 1982, and reported in Jersey Beat #1: The Cucumbers had just played their first show at Maxwells. Even Worse (featuring Jack Rabid) and Adrenalin O.D. were about to play the Silver Dollar Saloon in Harrison. Daniel Rey's Shrapnel was opening for the Smithereens at the Dirt Club. Our favorite radio show was WNYU's Noise: The Show, a weekly all-hardcore half-hour hosted by Tim Sommer which featured lots of U.K. bands like The Business and Flux Of Pink Indians. Brand-new records in the stores included the Bongos' "Bulrushes" 45 and the Individuals' first EP, "Aquamarine." Lyle Hysen reported on New York's new hardcore scene, noting his favorite band was Heart Attack. Other bands included the Undead, False Prophets, Kraut, Reagan Youth, and Nihilistics. Vin Scelsa had just resigned from WNEW-FM after the station had abandoned its pioneering "free-form" format and instituted its first playlist.

Update: The Cucumbers are still alive & kicking, although Jon Fried and Deena Shoskes are now married with children and living in the suburbs. Jack Rabid is no longer playing in bands but he still publishes his fanzine, The Big Takeover. Daniel Rey became a successful producer (Ramones, D Generation.) Adrenalin O.D. called it quits in 1990 but several members are still active in area bands (Paul Richard and Jack Steeples in Killer Kowalski; Jim Long in Electric Frankenstein.) Daniel Rey just produced the new Misfits album and is producing Ronnie Spector's new project. We don't know if Tim Sommer still plays his old hardcore records; but we do know that he went on to become an A&R man at Atlantic Records and signed the very un-punk Hootie & The Blowfish to the label. Richard Barone and Jim Mastro of the Bongos and Janet Wygal of the Individuals still perform locally. Individuals lead singer Glenn Morrow is now co-owner of Hoboken's Bar None Records, while drummer Doug Wygal works for Columbia Records. Lyle Hysen, after years of playing in bands (the Misguided and Das Damen,) now runs his own music publishing firm. Jesse Malin and Howie Pyro of Heart Attack now play in D Generation, who recently released their second major label album. Davie Gunner of Kraut is now singing in Broke NYC. And Vin Scelsa is still one of the most beloved voices on New York radio - ironically enough, back on WNEW FM. Jersey Beat contributor Karen Schoemer now writes for Newsweek; Jim DeRogatis, after a short tenure at Rolling Stone, is a freelance writer and author, currently working on a biography of Lester Bangs.

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Independent Label rates:

Full Page	\$60
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Jersey Beat

Jersey Beat #59

Cover by John Crawford
Cartoons & art by Joel Menter & Dave Runt

Columnists

David Brock, Dave 'Thirsty' Brown, Mick Hale, Rod Leighton,
Greg Matherly, Jeff Shore, Ben Weasel

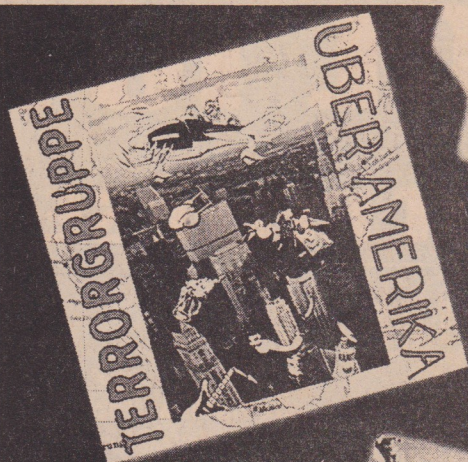
Contributors

Tom Brebric, Justin Borucki, Jon Clark, Michael Chant, Tom Farkas, Mike Fournier, Rev. Keith Gorgon, Rich Hall, Stacey Heim, Howie Kutner, John Lisa, Phil Pinto, Frank Phobia, Johnny Puke, Rich Quinlan, Paul Silver, Shawn Scallen, Denis Sheehan, Eva Silverman, Susanne Thompson, Dave Urbano, and John Ribas as The Beaver

The following is a chronological listing of everyone who has contributed to Jersey Beat over its first 15 years. This list includes some of my closest friends and a few people who I wouldn't recognize if I bumped into them at the supermarket. It doesn't matter. It goes without saying that none of this would have happened without them, and I thank each and every one for their time and effort and for being part of Jersey Beat. - Jim T.

THE JERSEY BEAT STAFF, 1982-1997

Pattie Kleinke, Howard Wuelfing, Lyle Hysen, Jerry Eckhoff, Gary Cahill, Pat Clarke, Larry C., Bob Gelormine, Lee Rosenstock, John Crawford, Ron Rimsite, Bruce Gallanter, Mike Lydon, John Souchak, Cathy Miller, Don Goodman, Jim DeRogatis, Todd Hess, Mick London, Brian Sommer, Jeryl Ann Bender, John D'Agostino, Dave Wyckoff, Pete Snell, Mike Stark, Paul Peaghe, Larry Grogan, Dawn Eden, Dave Run It, L. Cravat, Andy Peters, Dan X Mackta, Chris Friedrich, Cold Iron, Chris Francz, John Lisa, Karen Schoemer, Mike Aiello, Yosi Levin, Bruce 'Sick' Boyd, Terry Telenko, Nick Barracato, Tami Morgan, Mickey Melchiondo, St. Lords, Mark Fogarty, Mike Farrar, Nitti Bahr, Jamie Barnett, Carol Schutzbank, Ben Hogg, Tom Angelli, Dave Best, Ben Weasel, Eddie Fishman, Jeff Vanderclute, Dirk Bender, Ed Radich, Severin Wuelfing, Ken Katkin, Tony Rettman, Debbie Sager, Tom Brebrick, Ken Salerno, Debi Rotmil, Michele Taylor, Bryan Davis, Danny DiGia, Mike Lupica, Bill Lutz, Johnny Puke, Pete Reilly, Shawn Scallen, Jodi Shapiro, Sal Canestra, Rodney Leighton, Jamie Turner, Craig Donner, Mike Harbin, Chris Laules, Alex Swain, Erik Szantai, Alan Baez, Keith Gordon, Jerod Hanson, Leif Hunneman, Frank Phobia, The Platterpuss (Jeff Shore), Phil Schraeder, Des Jr., Matt Sonzala, Matt Shawkey, Danny Eldridge Jr., Dan Long, Hayley Greif, Greg Matherly, Jacquie Granger, Wayne Garcia, George Chen, Kris Nicholson, Alex Swain, Dave Urbano, Mark Weiss, Bob Byrne, Artie Phille, Artie Shepherd, James Turri, Wheezer, Joel Menter, Deanna Bailey, Sam Buonaugurio, Paul Barger, Mat Grd, Suzanne Thompson, Brandon Stoyus, Alex Saville, Rei Nishimoto, Matt Berland, Jon Clark, Jason Parrish, Jeff Scavone, Paul Silver, Pat Waara, Amy Jacob, David Brock, Dave Thirsty, Jana Crawford, Mike Gangloff, Yale Grauer, Howie Kutner, Bill Lutz, Matt Soell, Patrick West, Jason Borucki, Ryan Kelley, Phil Pinto, George Vlahogiannis, Michele Amabile, Mike Fournier, Mike Glumac, D. Michael MacNamara, Gore Savur, Michael Chant, Rich Hall, Rich Quinlan, Denis Sheehan, Stacey Heim, John Ribas, Tom Farkas, Eva Silverman.



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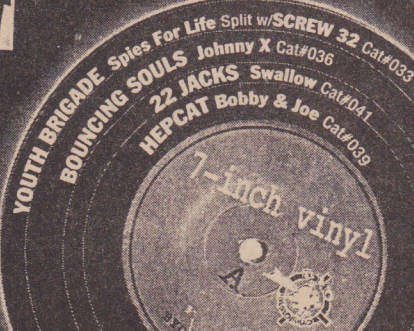


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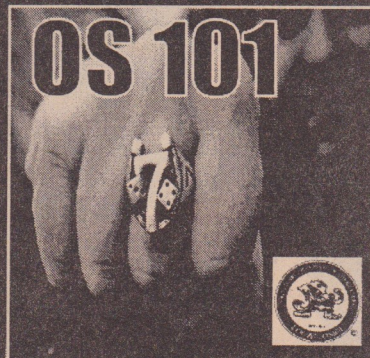
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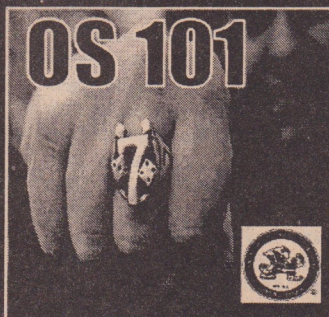
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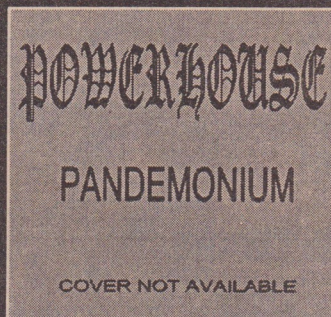


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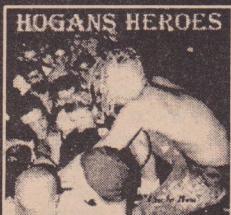
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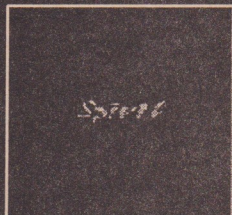
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This Is The Editorial

We've (Still) Got The Beat

"So what exactly is this thing you're holding in your hand? It's a fanzine, sort of, written like a magazine, we hope, and with an eye toward what's going on in original rock music in NJ and other cool places."

I wrote those words a little more than 15 years ago, and they began the first editorial in the first issue of Jersey Beat in March, 1982.

Jersey Beat was born a year earlier when my friend Howard Wuelfing, the Ayatollah of D.C.'s new-wave scene at the time (yes, Minor Threat-style hardcore was not the only kind of music being made in D.C. in 1981,) created *Discords*, a regional rock 'n' roll newspaper for all those misbegotten New Wave scenes all over the country that weren't getting any attention from the mainstream press. My contribution: A column about New Jersey called "Jersey Beat," a pun on Mersey Beat, the name given to Beatles' Liverpool scene of 20 years earlier. *Discords* had columns from Los Angeles and Minneapolis, as well as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Madison, Wisconsin. Fanzines were still a relatively new phenomenon; very few looked as swank or had as much ambition as *Discords*. It was a huge success.

It also proved to be my passport into Maxwells. Most people have heard about the groundbreaking music scene that revolved around the little Hoboken bar back then, with bands like the Bongos and Individuals (who all lived right in the neighbor-

hood) drawing the best and brightest writers, musicians, and artists from all over New Jersey and Manhattan. What most people can't realize is how intimidating it was to walk into the middle of all that as "the new guy."

Once we started doing *Discords*, Howard would send a stack of each new issue to his contributors, and I'd leave mine on the cigarette machine by Maxwells' front door. Pretty soon, the regulars - people like Ira Kaplan (the soundman back then,) DJ Guy Ewald (a wonderful human being and someone whose friendship and generosity I'll never forget,) and Steve Fallon, the owner - figured out who I was and made me feel a little more like a member of the club. I'll never forget the day I walked into Maxwells and Ira Kaplan walked over to me and said, "Come with me, the Bongos want to meet you." That was the day I knew I was in.

A few months later, my friend Howard and his wife announced they were getting divorced, and that was the end of *Discords*. But I knew I didn't want to give up writing about the Bongos and all the other amazingly cool stuff that was happening at Maxwells every week - not to mention all the other bands and clubs that were springing up all over New Jersey. So I decided - in true punk spirit - that if Howard wasn't going to publish "Jersey Beat" anymore, I'd do it myself.

And then it just kind of took over my life.

Today, I look back at the last 15 years the way I hope most people look back at their life - with a few regrets, but a lot of wonderful memories.

For years, well-meaning friends and relatives would ask when I was going to expand the zine so it would turn a profit, so I could "get something out of it." Little did they know. *Jersey Beat* has allowed me to go places and do things that I never would have dreamed of, as well as the opportunity sit down and talk with some of the most influential, creative, and important musicians of my generation. I started publishing *Jersey Beat* because I wanted to be a writer, and today, I can say that I've written for *Rolling Stone* and *Request*, as well as *maximumrocknroll* and *Punk Planet*. After nearly ten years of footing the bill out of my own pocket, *Jersey Beat* actually breaks even these days, and the opportunities it's created for me as a freelance writer have even fattened my bank account a little.

After 15 years, the obvious question is, "Why do I keep doing this?" Oddly enough, no one ever asks me that question, but I'd like to answer it. First in importance are the friends I've made. Secondly is the sense of pride and accomplishment when a new issue comes back from the printer and I can hold it in my hands and say, "this is something I made, this is mine." People who spend their lives working for others and using their leisure time only to consume things others make never know that feeling. I'm not famous, far from it. And I wouldn't want to be famous, not after seeing what fame has done to the few people I've known who have achieved it. But I'm not anonymous either, and that's important to me too.

And finally, there's the pride and satisfaction I've enjoyed from





encouraging others to get involved with what I'm doing and watching them mature into a good writers. A lot of people have written for Jersey Beat over the years and some of them have gone on to great things. Others have simply enjoyed discovering they had a talent. I'd like to think that none of them regret having spent a little of their free time helping me put this thing together.

There are so many people I would have to thank for the last 15 years that it's next to impossible to listen them all, but I need to mention a few: My oldest friend Howard Wuelfing, who put me on this path; Jim DeRogatis, who's dragged me along behind him whenever he's climbed another rung of the rock-critic ladder; the people who were there at the beginning and helped Jersey Beat survive its first few years, including Pattie Kleinke, Bruce Gallanter, the late Patrick Clarke, and Steve Fallon; and Mick Hale, a good friend for a long time who's always there when I need him. And of course a special thank you to the many people who have contributed in one way to another to Jersey Beat over the years.

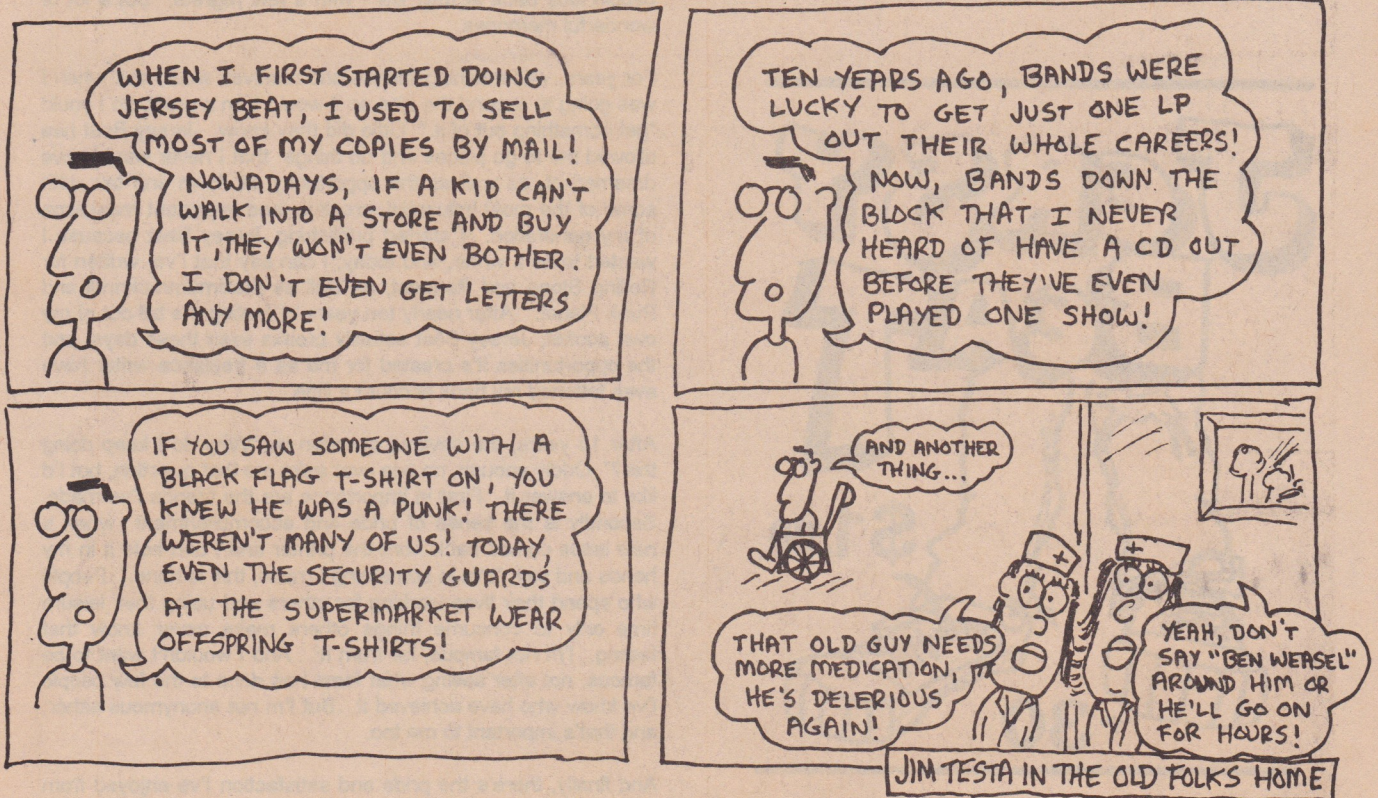
The next question is, where do we go from here? There was a time when I thought that our 10-year anniversary or issue #50 might be a good place to quit, or at least start over. But those milestones came and went, and here we are... thinking that with a new century right around the corner, it would be downright dumb to stop now.

So I'll just make the same promise that I made to myself when this all started: I'll stop when it stops being fun, when I don't have anything left to say, or when I find myself putting more into it than I'm getting out of it.

As to when that will be, well... don't hold your breath.

- Jim Testa, March 1997

Dave Run It



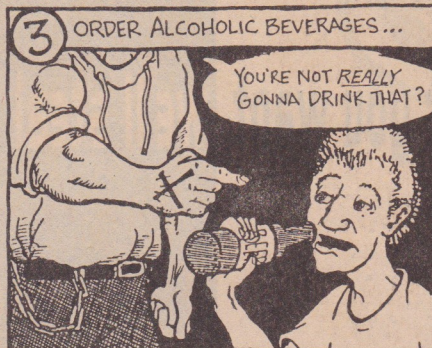
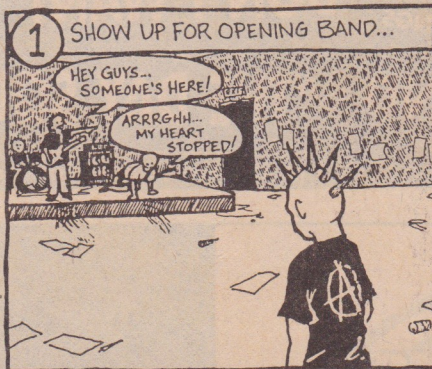


REASONS FOR DOING A FANZINE -



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Ben Weasel Said So

Ben Weasel began writing for *Jersey Beat* in 1988 with "The Ben Weasel Skate Report," a column of record reviews in Ben's inimitable curmudgeonly style. Since then, as well all know, he's gone on to bigger & better things, but with this issue, we are delighted to welcome him back as a regular contributor. - Jim T.

Ever since I got the boot from *Maximum RockNRoll*, people have been asking me why I'm not writing for another fanzine. I always tell them the same thing: NOBODY'S ASKED!

When I asked Jim if I could write a column here, he said, "Sure. I wanted to ask you but I figured you were too busy."

Maybe I'm really the beautiful cheerleader who never gets asked out on dates because everybody assumes she already has one. Maybe I'm not. But let me dream, wouldja?

Writing for *Jersey Beat* was the first real writing gig I had. Actually, my first public writing was in a double-sided newsletter of sorts which I published. I called it the *Slam Sheet*. I wrote it out by hand and handed it out at shows and tried to avoid getting punched. I did stupid things that really amused me to no end, like drawing a maze with a punk rocker on the inside and a skinhead on the outside. "Help the skin find the punk!" I encouraged my readers. The drawing appeared under the heading "UNITY-NSTUFF." Even in my more dogmatic days, I hated stupid punk rhetoric.

I also got a gig writing for a wussy Chicago-area rag called *Non-Stop Banter* when I wrote them a letter telling them that their punk coverage sucked, that they were a bunch of elitist snobs and that the bands they liked all sucked canal water. They responded by taking me on as a record reviewer which was just sort of the way a lot of people were ten years ago. Jim Testa was friendly with the *Non-Stop Banter* people and when they folded (or I got canned - I truly don't remember), he saw some glimmer of hope in my extremely poorly written record reviews and asked me to join the *Jersey Beat* staff. That was roughly ten years ago. Now *Jersey Beat* is celebrating its fifteenth year anniversary and that makes me feel even older than does the prostate infection I'm currently fighting.

Amazingly, *Jersey Beat* still doesn't get the accolades it deserves. There are two reasons why. First, like its underappreciated Boston counterpart, *Suburban Voice* (I can't tell you how happy I was when the first Screeching Weasel record got a good review in *Suburban Voice*. Next to *Maximum RockNRoll*'s review, it was one of the biggest signs of encouragement I got early on, admittedly only because I thought *Suburban Voice* was really cool), it's an East Coast fanzine and the East Coast just don't get no respect. Hasn't in almost twenty years.

Secondly, *Jersey Beat* is a music fanzine. In the truest sense of the word FANzine. Jim Testa is a *fan* of music and he possesses some bizarre urge to let the rest of the world in on his obsessions (and I don't really give a fuck if I'm starting to sound like an old fart when I tell you THAT'S THE WAY FANZINES USED TO BE AND IT WAS BETTER!) no matter how unknown (or oftentimes, shitty) the band.

Maximum RockNRoll is only about one-eighth fanzine. The other seven-eighths are comprised of bigmouths like me telling you why I'm right and you're wrong, discussions about Marxism vs. Anarchy, musings about the eternal question which is not "What is the meaning of life?" but rather "What is punk?" and a bunch of failed musicians taking their hostility out on other people's records (when they're not pumping up their friends' releases like they're the second coming of the Ramones [and that said, I believe that out of every goddamn thing I've ever released, I've only gotten one bad review and one mediocre review from MRR so this statement doesn't come from bitterness]). Jim also uses kid gloves on his friends' bands in *Jersey Beat* but at least he doesn't believe his own bullshit and I've never seen him go out and tell his readers something's great - friends or not - when it actually sucks canal water). *Jersey Beat* is 100% fanzine. Well, eighty-five percent fanzine and fifteen percent ads.

People really don't like music fanzines anymore. They want MAGAZINES that feature cranks like me telling them why they're idiots so they can have something to write to each other on their internet postings while listening to their cuddly fucking bunny rabbit punk CD's and eating their vegetables like good little boys and girls.

Jersey Beat rarely delves into punk scene issues with the gusto of other fanzines. Sure, Jim will take a stand on mindless violence (the late '80s NY hardcore scene) or eulogize a dying venue

There are plenty of fanzines that cover politics, the punk scene, the editor's personal life, mainstream cultural aberrations and whatever else you can think of. But how many fanzines are there in the world that are really about music?

(the mid-'90s NY punk scene) but *Jersey Beat* is a music fanzine and it's written by Jim and other people who really *like* music. Jim certainly isn't without his views on the punk scene. In fact, I believe I was brought on board in 1987 (or '88 - my memory is lousy) primarily to attack the idiotic New York bands that festered like a boil on the same Lower East Side that once spawned sheer genius. Jim will take time out for more personal stuff (like his recent piece on Donny The Punk) and he'll gladly fly down to Austin to rub elbows with big-time rock critics primarily so he can relate to us how many crummy bands he saw, how much bad seafood he washed down with piss-water beer, and who won the stupid softball game. But despite this, it's about rock and roll. It may be an ugly little baby, but it's JIM's baby and he loves it and I think that's great.

Fifteen years is an incredibly long time to publish a fanzine that doesn't make money. It's a long time to keep plugging away at something for just a few thousand people to read. It's a long time to be writing, editing, transcribing, bugging people to meet deadlines and laying out text and photos after a long day at work and a subway ride home to the bowels of New Jersey. But if that's all there was to it, I wouldn't be impressed. I'll tell you why I read every issue of *Jersey Beat* that comes to my door pretty much cover to

cover: Because it's uplifting. You read me right. Upfuckinglifting. Unlike *MaximumRockNRoll* it doesn't depress me. It leaves me feeling like there are still people who just want to hear good music. People who just want to have a good time at a show. People who think punk rock is supposed to be *fun*. There are plenty of fanzines that cover politics, the punk scene, the editor's personal life, mainstream cultural aberrations and whatever else you can think of. But how many fanzines are there in the world that are *real* about music? And by the way, how many fanzines that *are* about music are able to cover it in a way that simultaneously exhibits qualitative journalism as well as traditional fanzine FANdom? *Jersey Beat* is that rare combination of quality writing and a wonderfully unprofessional excitement about rock and roll.

Jim has given so much press to so many little bands, many of whom broke up a few months after their *Jersey Beat* interview appeared, and plenty who have gone on to become extremely successful in punk rock and, in some cases, in the mainstream. Jim doesn't discriminate. His love of a band is pretty much his only criteria for whether or not they'll be covered. Granted, Jim's taste in music is sometimes incredibly baffling - but his enthusiasm makes up for his occasional lapse in taste.

But the most important thing about *Jersey Beat* is that it encourages young bands to keep trying. *Jersey Beat* pretty much treats everybody respectfully, as long as they're sincere in trying to bring us good music. When I was still a teenager, Jim took the time out to write me encouraging notes about the band and - I'll never forget this -

actually typed up and mailed me a little list of labels that I might try pushing my band to. Of course it didn't work, but so what? Jim was the only fanzine editor I wrote to who took the time to try and help me and my crappy band out (and we WERE crappy).

It's a good thing that there are still fanzines like *Jersey Beat* around to remind us that we don't always have to focus on the ultimately disposable trappings of a subculture that is, at its core, really about rock and roll. I'm proud to be writing for *Jersey Beat* again.

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2	Scared	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	97
3	Rod	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	118
4	Travel	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	114
5	Scared	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	125
6	Chaka	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	107
7	Chaka	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	107
8	Chaka	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	107
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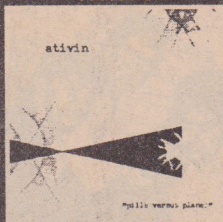


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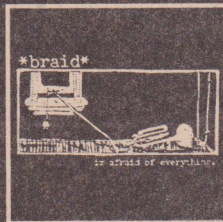
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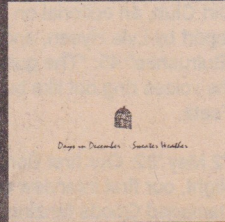
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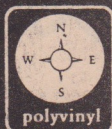


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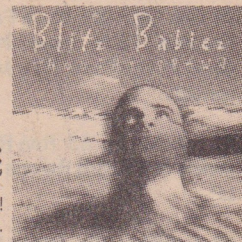
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Fifteen years of mindless

#1 March '82: Our first issue: 14 pages, printed on an offset press at a small business printshop on Lower Broadway in Manhattan. Issues were distributed for free at Maxwell's and other clubs, and sold for 50 cents through the mail. The Jitterz, a cheesy new-wave bar band, grinned from the cover with the headline: NJ's Best? Inside, the answer was, "Maybe." Features on John Schroder, the beloved souse who ran Bloomfield's Dirt Club, an editorial on Going to Danceteria, a NY HC report by Lyle Hysen, and a review of the Bongos' "Bulrushes" 45: "The guitars peel like church bells and the voices ring out like bubblegum angels..." - Jim Testa.

#2 May '82: Our first Bongos cover story; Wind At Night, our first interview with Adrenalin OD; review of Damaged Goods fanzine, whose staff included Lyle Hysen, Jack Rabid, and Tim Sommer (who would go on to become the Atlantic A&R man who signed Hootie)

#3 Summer '82: Lester Bangs obituary, live review of a Bottom Line show featuring the Individuals and issue #1's new-wave coverboys, the Jitterz; a followup Bongos interview; Paul Richards (AOD) pinup

#4 Fall '82: Review of the Individuals' *Fields* LP; review of *This Is Boston, Not L.A.*; Bongos pinup

#5 Oct./Nov. '82: Our first "Baboon Dooley" comic strip; review of the Cucumbers' "My Boyfriend" 45; feature story on the Smithereens

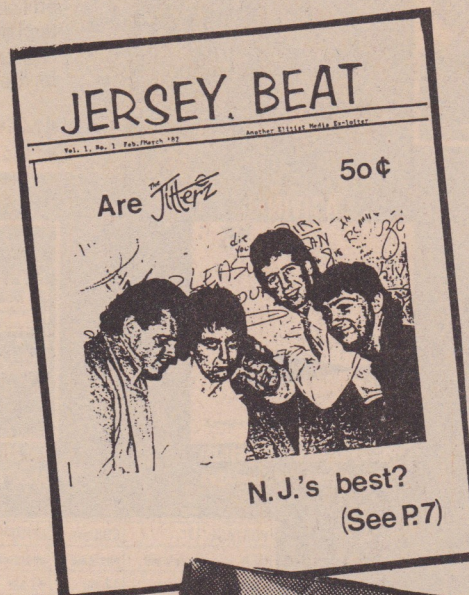
#6 Dec./Jan. '83: Steve Fallon forms Coyote Records, releases LPs by Steve Almaas and the Phosphenes; Sand In The Face, NJ's Mopeds, WFMU DJ John Narucki

#7 Feb./March '83: Ron Rimsite reports on garage-rock; review of Richard Barone and Jim Mastro's double-solo LP.

#8 April/May '83: Jersey Beat's 1st anniversary. Interview with Misfits wannabe's Mourning Noise; reviews include Minor Threat's "Out Of Step" and "Let's Barbecue With A.O.D." ("Suburbia... a classic gem of punkdom wherein there's melody solid and distinctive enough to stand up to the ridiculous velocity and volume... A classic, sez I!" - Howard Wuelfing)

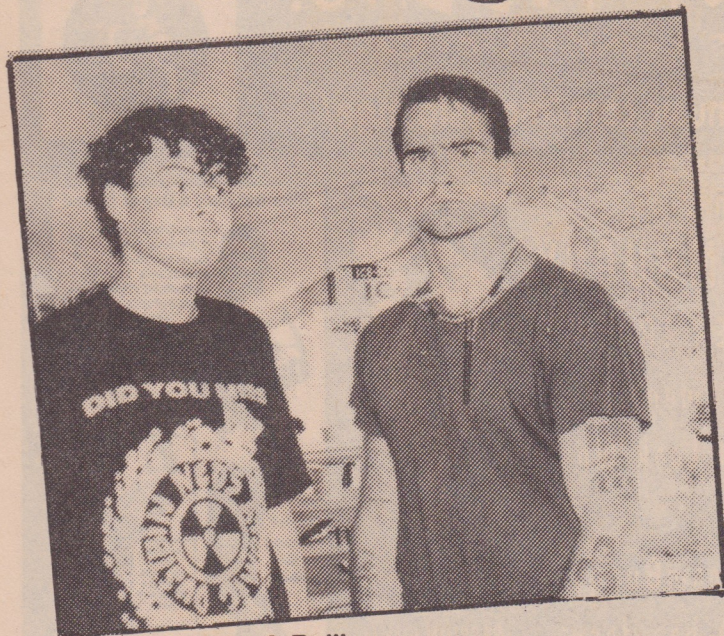
#9 July '83: Our first demo tape column; interview with Mod Fun, 16-year old NJ mods (whose lead singer, Mick London, is now the Mick Hale who writes our Danse Assembly column)

#11 Sept./Nov. '83: Review of the Bongos' "Numbers With Wings" EP, the first release by a Hoboken band on a major label. "What producer Richard Gottehrer has done to Hoboken's favorite sons I wouldn't wish on INXS... the guitars sound like synthesizers, the drums sound as if they'd been wrapped in wax paper, you can't hear Rob Norris' bass, and the vocals have been overdubbed and reverb'd into a soupy haze." - Jim Testa



Ween At 15

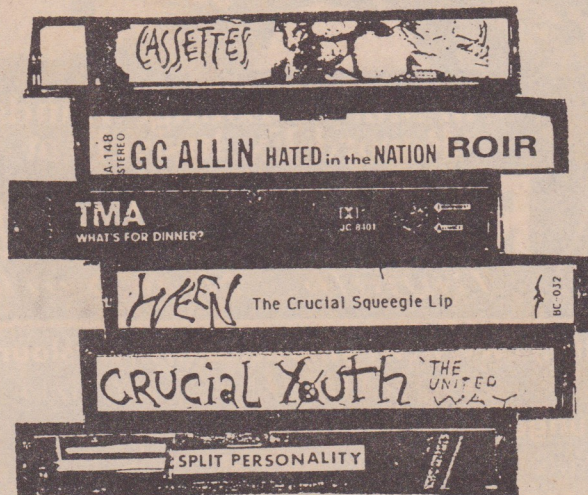
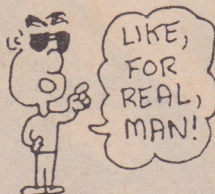
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THE BLISTERS



#12 Nov./Dec. '83: NY's psychedelic garage rock revival is in full swing and our cover story: Features on the Malkotians, Secret Syde, Vipers, Fuzztones, and ex-Raybeat Danny Amis' solo EP on Coyote.

#13 Feb./Mar. '84: Cover story: "Hoboken: What's Left?" "Every week, another Old World deli closes; another boutique or gourmet shoppe opens. Landlords, frustrated by years of artificially low rents, are gutting, rebuilding - in some cases, torching - their buildings; rent-controlled apartments are being replaced by \$90,000 condos. As the new urban gentry moves in, the city's ethnic heart is being pushed out."

#14 Mar./Apr. '84: Our first feature on the New Brunswick scene.

#17 Sept./Nov. '84: Jersey Beat's first Feelies interview. "Q: Where do you think you're going? Glenn Mercer: In and out, simultaneously. Q: That's why nobody interviews you. You talk in riddles. Dave Weckerman: That's because we don't know any of the answers." Reviews of the dB's *Like This* and Chris Stamey's "Instant Excitement" EP.

On *Like This*: "Holsapple's delivered a string of lulu's... litling and memorable..." On "Instant Excitement": "There's precious little here that could pass for exciting - just more of the self-congratulatory, smirking in-jokes and wimpy pretentiousness that's marked Stamey's solo work." - Jim Testa

#19 Early '85: We raise the cover price to 75 cents. Jim DeRogatis interviews Human Switchboard. "As a frontman, Bob Pfeifer is part Lou Reed, part James Brown, dancing lithely around the stage, playing slashing guitar lines, sweating out brilliantly written lyrics in a voice just good enough for rock and roll."

#23 Nov. '85: The "Whatever Happened To Hardcore?" issue. Interview with Kraut (whose "All Twisted" was successfully revived by Civ in 1995). "All Twisted" becomes the first video by a NY hardcore band to be shown on MTV.

#24 Dec. '85: Dawn Eden interviews Peter Holsapple of the dBs and the Fleshtones.

#25 Mar./Apr. '86: 4th Anniversary Issue, and the debut of Punk Teen, a minizine which profiles the Splatcats, Outlets, Soul Asylum, and Squirrel Bait: "Imagine the wailing, growling, mind-blowing intensity of Husker Du trapped inside the bodies of Menudo. Imagine the gonzo fashion sense of Anti-etam, the no-holds-barred fury of the Minutemen, and the sloppy zeitgeist of the Replacements all rolled up into one breakneck rock 'n' roll quintet." - Jim T.

#26 May/June '86: Reviews of Glenn Morrow's *Rage To Live*, the Feelies' *The Good Earth*, and Yo La Tengo's first LP, *Ride The Tiger*: "Ira Kaplan's vocals are usually good but buried in the mix, which may seriously hamper any chances for serious radio airplay. That's a shame, as I would love to hear songs this good crowd Night Ranger off the airways." - Chris Friedrich

#27 Aug./Sept. '86: Cover price goes up to \$1. The ShoreCore issue, with X Men, Good Humor, Shock Mom-mies, Social Decay, and Hogan's Heroes. Artwork by Bruce "Sick" Boyd, now of Grotus. Karen Schoemer interviews Miracle Legion and reviews the *Hanging Out At Midnight* compilation of NY garage bands. Dan X reviews the Blisters.

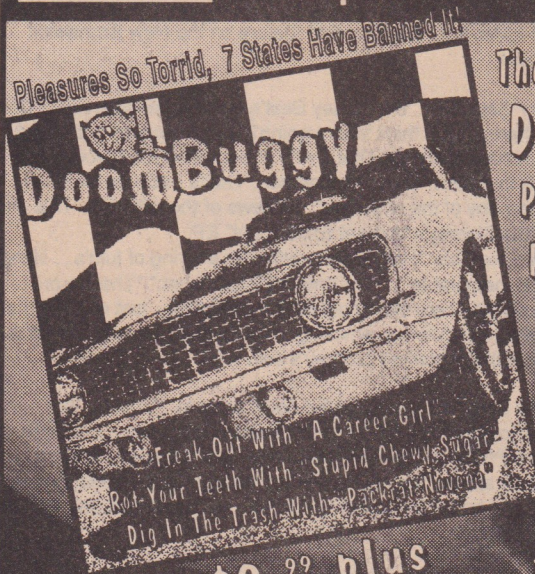
#29 Xmas '86: AOD wins Band Of The Year. Reviews of Raging Slab and Speed The Plough debut LPs and live review of Metallica/Metal Church at the Capitol Theater, Passaic.

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#30 Mar. '87: 5th anniversary and at 28 pages, the biggest issue ever! Cover by Nitti Bahr of the Blisters. Karen Schoemer interviews Richard Lloyd. Jim DeRogatis reviews Gutbank's *The Dark Ages*. Mickey Melchiondo ("Dean Ween," age 15, debuts as our demo tape columnist.

#32 Oct. '87: Jim DeRogatis reviews Chris Stamey's *It's Alright*: "(the lp) maintains the trademark Stamey rhythms and meandering song structures, but they are tamed by a big, modern-sounding production that emphasizes the hooks that were too often buried under the sonic weirdness of the past." Jim Testa reviews the new dB's, *The Sound Of Music*: "Four minutes into side 1 and all I could think of was Steve Albini's curt dismissal of the last dB's album - 'who're they kidding, this is the new Bryan Adams record.'"

#33 Jan. '88: The post-Bongos Hoboken scene begins to take shape: The first post-Bongos interview with Richard Barone (who says the band is on 'an extended hiatus,') the first look at Jim Mastro's new band, Strange Cave; a report on the Jersey Beat Benefit at Maxwells with Ween and the X Lion Tamers; and a review of Agnostic Front's *Liberty & Justice For...* "Sounds a bit fishy to me...I detect severe, tired crossover with more metal leanings" - Ben Hogg

#34 Spring '88: Up to 36 pages and the cover price goes up to \$1.50. Interview with the Goo Goo Dolls, hot off their first LP on Mercenary Records. Reviews of Tiny Lights, Anthrophobia, Splatcats, AOD, Alice Donut, and the debut of "The Ben Weasel Skate Report."

#35 Fall '88: Ed Gein's Car on the cover; reviews of Danzig, Fiendz, American Standard's first demo tape. Ben Weasel reviews Youth of Today's *We Are Not Alone*: "The perfect gag gift. It's hard to believe these stubbly-haired do-gooders are for real. But yes folks, I really do feel the emotion gushing from Ray 2Day when he whines about the scene and proclaims his integrity and commitment 392 times (and that's just Side A.)"

#37 Summer '89: Our first newsprint issue! Interviews with Agnostic Front, Youth Of Today, and Underdog. Reviews of *President Yo La Tengo*, the Goo Goo Dolls' *Jed*, and our first SXSW report.

#39 Jan. '90: The birth of the ABC No Rio scene and our first interview with Mike Bullshit; Das Damen, our first CMJ Music Marathon Report; 64 pages and still only \$1.50!

#40, Summer '90: Ex-Misfits Kryst The Conqueror tell all; we interview Jawbreaker at ABC No Rio; our last AOD interview. "Q: Does signing with Restless create a new challenge for you, reaching a new audience? Dave: Well, hopefully people with higher IQ's and over the age of 21 will start getting into us."

#42 Winter '91: Ween release *Satan Ween God: The Oneness* on TwinTone and make the



Let's barbecue with A.O.D.!



McRAD - Demo cassette
5616 Cedar Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143
Searing thrash-metal with arena-rock guitar leads, this band also plays reggae SO GUESS WHAT BIG NAME SST BAND IMMEDIATELY COMES TO MIND?!?!?
Anyway these guys are incredibly fucking hot to watch live and this tape manages to capture a lot of the emotion and energy that they exert whilst on stage. Last time I saw 'em it was mostly reggae with some thrash but this tape is almost all thrash-core. If this is kind of muzak is your bag of parsley, then write for it.

CARL CASANOVA - "White Fuck Sings The Blues"
171 3rd St., Jersey City, NJ 07305
The only thing that could possibly be worse than this is the band Carl was in before, Psycho Sin. CARL, GIVE IT THE FUCK UP! This is supposed to be "folk-punk." I've got a better label for it though: stupidpseudosuburbansuckshittinesscore. This kid wants you to listen to this tape and say, "gee whiz he's really in touch!" Wrong. Buy it to amuse yourself. Before you learn how to make good music, Carl, you have to learn how to speak. If you haven't understood this review yet, I'll write this last sentence in Cassanovian for you: Dis tape here muddafukkin iddint veddy fuhkkin good and evryting Karl so fuhk yawseff.

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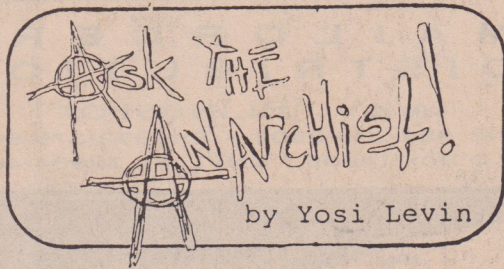
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Love,
Rhonda (from California)

Dear Nubile Young Virgin,

How right you are... I am the only one who is capable to relieve you of your burden. First, you are not the only one... many young horny femmes have written the same letter, so this goes to all of you! Send nude photos of yourselves (alone) in various sexual positions to "Ask The Anarchist" (c/o "I Wanna Lose It" Contest). The winners will be flown to beautiful downtown Newark, NJ, where they'll spend 3 gorgeous days and nights in La Holiday Inn Motel with our hardworking, generous judges...and then return to their respective hometowns with no guilt, no gossip, and great satisfaction.

Dear Mr. Anarchist,

As a high priest in the tri-state area, I make a point of (blah blah blah) and furthermore... (blah blah blah) poisoning the minds of young (blah blah blah) spoke to the Vatican... immoral, anti-religious... in short, you are doomed to Hell. Stop this column! Beg forgiveness. Find love and hope in Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Bishop O'Brian

Dearest and kindest loving Father,

I realize I have been wayward, unruly, and perhaps somewhat pagan, Your argument is strong and to the point, yet there is a slight oversight on your part. Allow me to express this grey blemish slightly... God doesn't exist! Now please leave me alone... \$100 check for the Oral Roberts fund is in the mail.

Dear Ask The (sex) Anarchist,

I love your (sex) column. I (kill) think it's (masturbate) great! But I (buy a Teddy Ruxpin) think it's filled with (sex) subliminal (die) messages. Therefore, I refuse (sex) to read (cry) it anymore (o.d.). Sorry (MTV), I was (Coke is it!) really beginning to (masturbate) like it.

Dave

Dear (pinko) Dave,

I (sex) understand your (Commie!) problem. But (Buy Our Records) I assure you (God is Dead), there are no (Satan!) subliminal (laugh) messages (clap!) to be found anywhere (tits & ass) in my (penis) column. You are (cancer) just suffering from a (sex) mild case of (read Ask The Anarchist) paranoia.

[Editor's Note: Dear Yosi, I think (READ JERSEY BEAT!) that you (BUY OUR T SHIRTS!!) handled that one (NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND, ONLY \$4 POSTPAID) really well!
- Editor]

Dear Yosi,

I'm not writing about a problem I have, but a problem YOU have. I've seen The Exposed play twice so far & both times you did some crazy things on stage. I definitely think you need to be checked by a brain surgeon.

- Innocent Bystander

Dear G.G.,

Thanks for your concern. I have seen a brain surgeon. In fact, I've seen several. The general consensus is that I should be put away and that no one heed my advice.

cover of Jersey Beat. "Q: What is a ween? Dean: We are Ween. We are fucking Ween. Our whole lifestyle is pretty much fucking Ween, and our whole train of thought is pretty fucking Ween. I dunno... I just used to call Gene a fucking ween and it stuck."

#43 Summer '91: Our first glossy cover. Price goes up to \$2. Mick Hale (nee London) debuts Danse Assembly column.

#44 Fall/Winter '91: A special report on 7 inches. Johnny Puke interviews Rollins backstage at the first Lollapalooza Festival. Interviews with the Fiendz and New Brunswick's Motel Shootout.

#45 Winter '92: Johnny Puke interviews Nirvana in the midst of *Nevermind*-mania, the first non-NJ band to be on the cover. "We don't want to be associated with any 'rock' bands," says Grohl. "We may play some 'rock' clubs.. We don't want people to be turned off by this 'rock band' signed to a major label. We're still the same people with the same music."

#46 Summer 1992: Special double 10th anniversary issue. Interviews include Sweet Lizard Illtet, L7, False Prophets, FIREHOSE, Trusty, and Jim DeRogatis' 1982 interview with Lester Bangs, conducted a few days before his death.

#47 Fall '92: Our first Screeching Weasel interview. "Doing shows and touring is great but the main thing is to get your records out," says Ben Weasel. "Because if somebody owns a record, they're gonna have it 15 years from now, and they might listen to it then. And even if 15 years from now Screeching Weasel is just a tiny footnote in the annals of rock history, if the record is sitting there, someone is going to listen to it and say, wow, that was good music, but that band was also saying something... I think there's a spirit in our music that does say something, and that's what's important to me, worming your way into peoples' lives." Jersey Beat starts opening up to more non-local acts: Faith No More, Senseless Things from U.K., Lemonheads.

#49 Summer '93: Special NJ Scene Report issue, with Crocodile Shop, New Brunswick report, Hoboken report. Our first interview with Spent: "Hoboken's cool, but it's also very, very expensive. Jersey City is the place to be." - John King.

#51 Summer '94: We ask "Is Punk Dead?" on the cover and interview Larry Livermore, Green Day, Jawbox, & Sinkhole for the answer. Plus: a good-bye to Kurt Cobain.

#53 Winter '95: Making It In New York, a special report on making it in the world's toughest scene, with Quicksand and Jeff Buckley. Plus in-depth interviews with Poster Children and Mike Watt.

#54 Summer '95: The Do It Yourself Issue - tips on home recording, basement shows, running a label, zines, plus a NJ punk scene report with American Standard, Dogpound, Flatus, One Nature, Headache Records, and Halo Boots.

#57 Summer '96: We finally get around to interviewing Murphy's Law and get a mouthful: "Learn how to play guitar before you start yapping about how you're better than me because you're not drinking. You don't eat meat? Great. Next. You don't drink? Great. Next. Big fuckin' deal I don't care. There are heavier issues in this world than what people are eating and drinking." - Jimmy Gestapo

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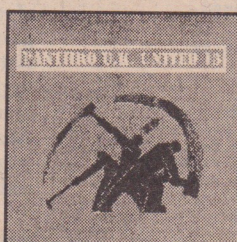
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U.S. CHAOS

By Tom Brebrie

I seems like only yesterday when I first heard the line of one of U.S. Chaos' songs that goes, "That voice in your head is telling you you'd be better off dead". It was actually around 1984, though, so when I saw the band listed in a recent club ad, I thought it was a joke. Yet sure enough, U.S. Chaos is indeed back and I caught up with them at one of their rehearsals to chat about the past and present.

Q: The obvious first question has to be: what brought you guys back together after more than 10 years?

Jack: A friend of ours - someone who sets up a stage in his yard every August - does something called Poopstock. He came up to Gary and said it would be fun if we got back together.

Gary: It was the phone call I've been waiting ten years to get. Seeing all these other young punk bands like Green Day making it - it was like, "we can do that, we did that before."

Skully: We were a live band, we put out mainly singles.

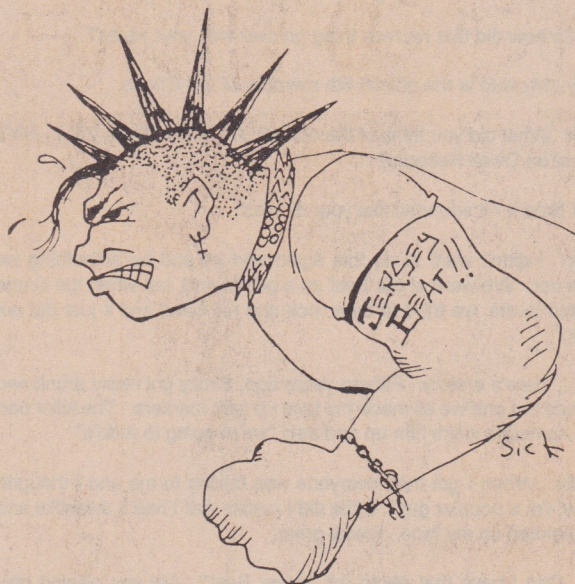
Q: I recall you said you only had eight songs in your repertoire.

Gary: Yeah, that's all we had on vinyl. If you look around now there's a scene again with places to play. I'm not sure if we broke up or fell apart, but there weren't any places left to play. The Peppermint Lounge, The Dirt Club, etc. all closed down and the places that were left wouldn't book punk bands.

Jack: It got to the point that we still wanted to play so we stopped calling ourselves U.S. Chaos and booked ourselves as Chaos and would tell people we were a hard rock band. We got booked somewhere in West Paterson. (at this point we reminisce about Hitsville in Passaic, NJ and the fact that US Chaos will be opening for the business on April 17 at the Pipeline.)

Q: It must be a cool experience to be opening up for old time punk bands that you remember growing up listening to.

Gary: The problem is some of them come back that shouldn't.



Q: Do the kids that come see you know your material?

Jack: The thing is that we're bootlegged to a ridiculous extent. I got a letter from some kid in Michigan wanting to know if he could get any U.S. Chaos stuff. Everybody wants new stuff.

Q: When do you think we'll see some new stuff?

Jack: We're working on it - we're doing last call - a cover done by everyone.

Gary: We're still the same as we were, we didn't go on to play all different styles of music. When Chaos ended, I closed my guitar case and put it away.

Skully: I was with the Chosen Few for a couple years.

Eddie: I was with the Undead for awhile, and Fahrenheit 451.

Gary: What's changed now is that we're sitting around saying like it's 9 PM, I gotta get home because I have to get up early to go to work. Except for Jack, we're all married. The energy at the shows is back. Our attitude is that we're the biggest unknown band you've never heard of.

Q: How many of your old friends came to your first reunion show?

Gary: We opened up for the Blanks at the Pipeline and it was wild. A lot of the old people who used to go see us came. All these old people were at the bar and the kids were all staring at them. All our old friends came up front and slam danced. That's my favorite show.

Q: How do you guys get along now?

Jack: We fuckin' hate each other.

Skully: I don't care about anyone.

Q: Who needed the most persuasion to return to the band?

Skully: Shithead over here. (points to Jack)

Jack: Once I saw my replacement at Poopstock...

Gary: Someone stole Jack's Saxophone at Poopstock.

Q: So how did this reunion thing go over with your wives?

Gary: My wife is the official 5th member of US Chaos.

Jack: What did you think of the comp? (*Punk Dwellings Vol. 1 - NY's Finest* on Dwell Records)

Q: I liked it - it sounded like your old stuff.

Gary: I didn't want to do this again and try and be something we were not. We were at our best as a punk band, but when the scene started to die, we tried to be a rock and roll band and it just did not work.

Gar Here's a story. Fifteen years ago, Skully got really drunk and passed out and we all made his face up with markers. The killer part was someone woke him up and said "we're going to Aldo's".

Skully: When I got their everyone was talking to me and I thought, Wow, I'm a popular guy! Little did I realize that I had a swastika and "hi" painted on my face. It was great.

Q: Can I have that photo for Jersey Beat? Are you playing only local shows?

Gary: No, we've been to Boston twice, Albany, Lancaster. People know of us. I heard someone at the bar say, "Chaos, isn't that the 80s band?"

Q: Is there any interest in reissuing your old stuff?

Gary: There's a lot of interest, the problem is we don't have the master tapes.

Q: Why is that?

Gary: Drugs, stupidity... We are going to reissue the EP as a picture disc with the album cover and a band photo. We put out an EP at a thousand dollars a song! I talk to kids today who've done a double album and like 15 singles for that! The record pressing plants cried when we broke up. We're a lot smarter now and we're not putting up any of our own money now. If you do that, you don't get anything back for it. I'm not going to put up a lot of money so that

someone else can sell records. A lot of new bands fall into that trap - like we did before.

Q: Do you still get the same kind of feeling when you play as you did the last time around?

Jack: It depends on what kind of audience we get.

Gary: At Connections, the audience just comes and stares. It's an older crowd. It's our job as a band to make you like us, it's not like "we've done this before therefore you *have* to like us." The younger crowds always have a lot more energy than the older ones.

Jack: When we were a punk band we took a lot of shit when hardcore was big. Now everyone is into punk.

Q: Speaking of shit, I heard that back in the old days you would send shit to people who gave you guys bad reviews.

Jack: Hope it wasn't your review! We got a bad review because someone said we had bogus rockstar attitudes, we should go back to England with our leopard skin amps, etc... so I took a shoebox and shit in it for a week up in my attic and lined the shoebox with leopard from my amplifier.

Gary: We're waiting for some record company to give us billions of dollars.

Q: So you wouldn't be ashamed to sell out?

Gary: The thing about this band is that we couldn't sell out even if we wanted to because we're a punk band and we couldn't play heavy metal. Eddie is the only one who's a musician in the band. We're only doing this because we like to. Will we be doing it five years from now, playing for \$45 a night? I don't know. We want to take it broader than we did the first time.

Jack: We're going to give it hell for a few years. Back in the day the band was my life.

Gary: But the dream died. Doing gigs for \$50 a night.

Q: But the money part hasn't changed.

Gary: No, that's still the same. But we're back, we're the same as we were and the inspiration is back. Incidentally, here's some trivia: Ron - the guy who does the door at the Loop Lounge - was the very first singer for U.S. Chaos - but he could not rehearse on Monday because of Monday Night Football.



From Jersey Beat #15, May/June 1984

'U.S. Chaos pokes fun at the seriousness and sometimes stifling formula that many HC bands adhere to; as a result, these guys are not well-liked by many hardcore units. U.S. Chaos is basically into partying, beer and tattoos - crazy for the fun of it. They leave the politics to others. The music is simple but real direct - a mixture of Sex Pistols and Stooges. Strong, but vacuous; but who cares? Certainly not their fans. The look: Lots of skull & crossbones insignias, and the lead singer has one of the strangest blond mohawks. Lyrics are tongue in cheek, full of macho swagger and mock patriotic posturing. Obnoxious but fun. Your move.'

- Bruce Gallanter

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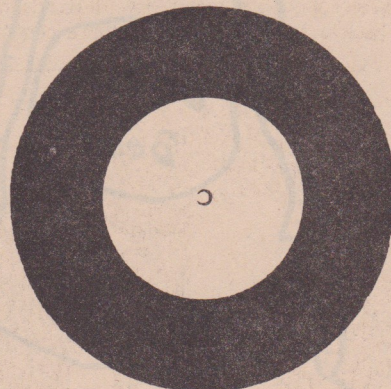
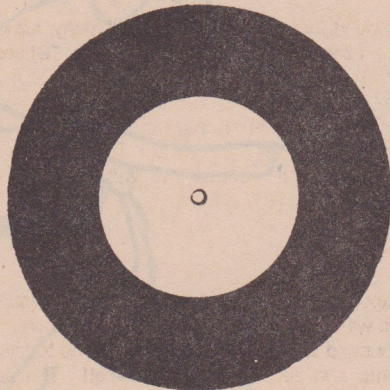
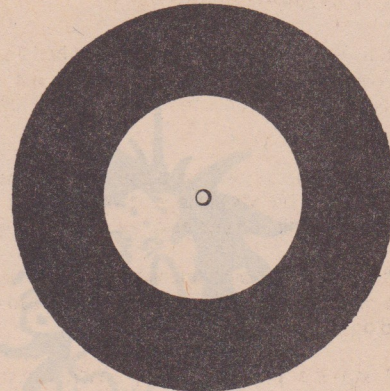
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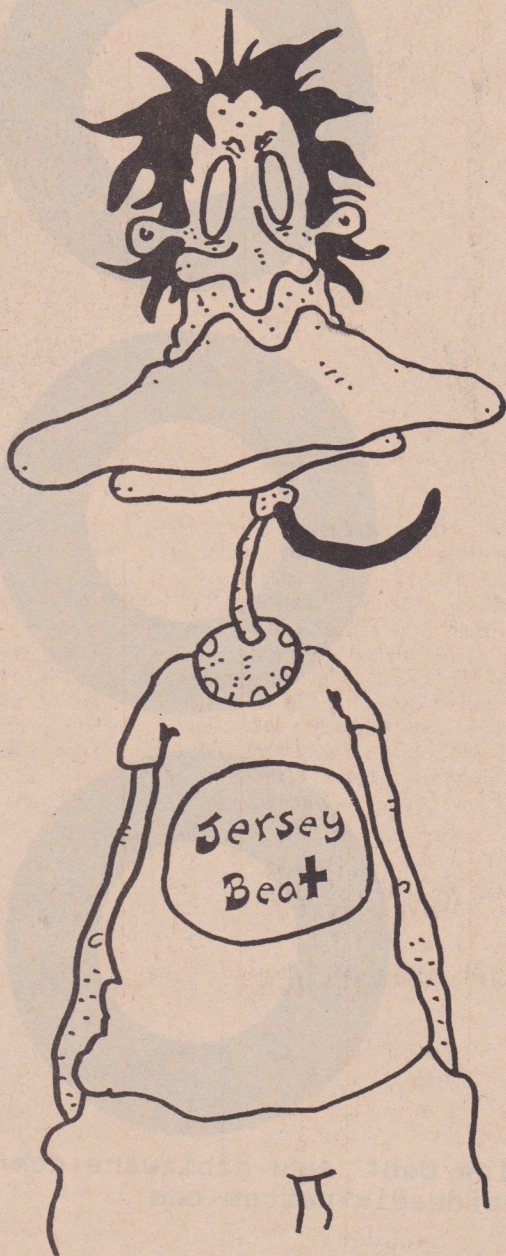
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John CRAWFORD



Year in and year out, going back almost as long as there's been a punk scene in America, John Crawford's comic strips have documented its foibles and skewered its sacred cows. In the Eighties, Crawford's "Baboon Dooley Rock Critic" became an inescapable fixture in the fanzine underground. Today, he remains a unique and priceless commodity: Punk's premiere - and arguably, its only - practicing satirist. His targets - hypocrisy, pretension, and greed. His weapons - a razor-sharp wit and the keen eye of an accomplished caricaturist. His mortal enemies include some of the most important people in the punk scene, but his biggest fan has always been right here at Jersey Beat, where we've been publishing his cartoons for more than a dozen years. And I couldn't think of anyone I wanted to be in this anniversary issue more than John Crawford. - Jim Testa

Q: I can remember seeing Baboon Dooley in other zines when I first started *Jersey Beat* in 1982 and wondering how I could get copies of the strips myself. When exactly did you start Baboon Dooley, Rock Critic?

Crawford: You didn't start *Jersey Beat* too much after I started Baboon Dooley. I drew my first Baboon Dooley Rock Critic strip on the morning after a particularly brutal New Year's Eve, the first hangover of 1981. I think it was an alcohol hallucination. It didn't appear anywhere beyond Kinnelon NJ. Basically the idea was to answer some of the rather unkind charges that were in these so-called newsletters that began to appear in the town where I grew up. These newsletters were done anonymously and with the sole purpose of slagging the shit out of whoever the target of the moment was. The authors would Xerox copies of their speculations and leave them in your mailbox. What inspired me to pursue the creative life was to get back at the insidious souls who had chosen me for target of that moment. While I never did totally vanquish my tormentors, I certainly outlasted them. And certainly the spirit lives on.

Q: So how did that neighborhood newsletter evolve into a syndicated comic strip?

Crawford: The newsletter wars began to get rather dull after a while, and I thought that maybe I was on to something and decided to take my efforts to a larger audience. After discovering that my Rock Critic comic strips were not going to be warmly received by the New York music press, ("They certainly don't groove ME!" -Andy Schwartz, *NY Rocker*) I was forced to look elsewhere. I stumbled across a copy of *OP* magazine, which later became *Option*. Back in those days *OP* used to review punk fanzines, a newish phenomenon of the time. I took all the addresses I could find, printed up a bunch of what I thought were my finest works, and posted them to the world. So began my single-handed attempt to rescue the US Postal Service. The first fanzine to take to my stuff in a big way was Tesco Vee's *Touch and Go* fanzine. I think Tesco and I brought out

the worst in each other, and we slagged the hell out of some of the larger sacred cows of the time. It's where my first Tim Yohannan strip appeared, the beginning of an enthusiasm I still hear the call of today.

Q: Why Yohannan?

Crawford: Because he was a big hippie, certainly the thing not to be in those bald-headed days. Largely unknown to today's concerned punk youth is that MRR is not Tim's first publication. That honor belongs to the long departed *All You Can Eat*, an NJ underground hippie pub of the early 70s. It preached the revolutionary potential of pot smoking and the longer hair styles, plus it reviewed major label records, Bruce Springsteen being a particular favorite. Tim's ability to hop from youth culture to youth culture while maintaining the same message of style-equaling-rebellion, struck some persons as being the mark of an inauthentic person, and we roasted him accordingly. Naturally Tim responded and it's been on for years. Best damn hobby I've ever had.

Q: I used to be amazed at how many zines published Baboon and - what most readers didn't know - that you never charged for the cartoons, but mailed them out at your own expense.

Crawford: I'm afraid those days have passed us by. I used to be pretty easy about those sorts of things, the one qualification for getting cartoons from me is you'd have to ask. However, the responsibilities of adulthood have caught up with me and I just don't have the time to participate in this vibrant underground culture as, um, intensely as I used to. When I was a more free man I sometimes got my mailing list up as high as 200. I did it for the mail and the info. It was lots of fun and I do at times miss it. Funny thing about getting what some slightly misinformed souls refer to as a life. Once you finally have one, you spend a lot of time longing for those days when you didn't. I still regularly contribute to *Flipside* and *Punk Planet*, and can occasionally be talked into doing something elsewhere.

Q: The strips you're doing now - notably "Queen Of The Scene" - seem much more acerbic and angrier than Baboon Dooley Rock Critic.

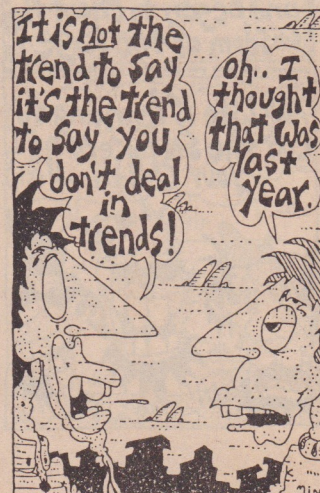
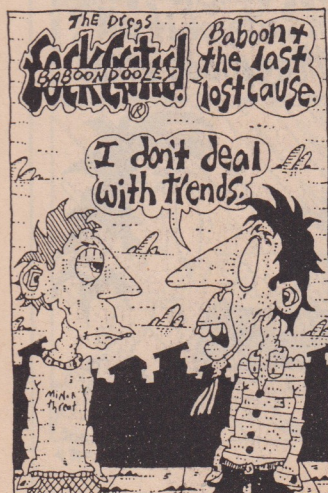
Crawford: Yes, I do hear that from time to time and I can't help but think people might be missing the point. To me the Yohannans and Biafras of this here world are the funniest, most bizarre, out and out hilarious bunch of lunatics it has ever been my honor to witness. Their absurd claims for the supposedly world-saving effects of their works makes the word "pretentious" linguistically inadequate. To me they are ideal comic strip characters because their lives are so, you know, cartoonish.

Let me give you an example of the kind of absurdity I'm talking about. On occasion, Yohannan will feel compelled to single out a record label in *Maximumrocknroll* as an example of what is evil in the world. You know, like a small independent record label is



Self-portrait, 1997

somehow responsible for the economic inequalities of humanity. Of course it is always a popular feature with his readers. Currently on the top of the hit list is Lookout Records. The knee-jerk true-believer readership of Tim's publication then predictably begins foaming at the mouth about sellouts and the supposed threat to the purity of their "scene". And yet who are these readers? They are the sons and daughters of some of the most economically privileged classes in the world today. They are leisure-class clients of a boutique consumer movement with the disposable income necessary to participate. So who made Lookout? The same people who are now attempting to tear it apart. Without their buying power, Lookout would never have become as successful or "big" as it is now. But now that

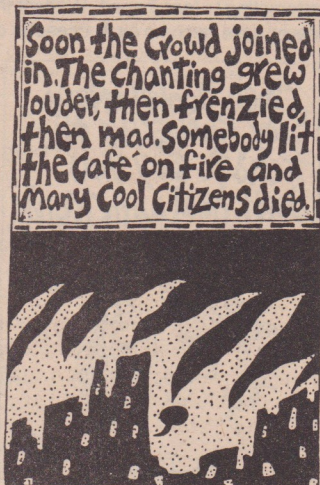
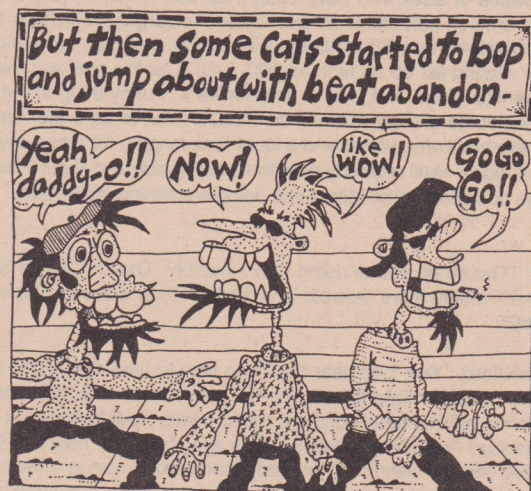
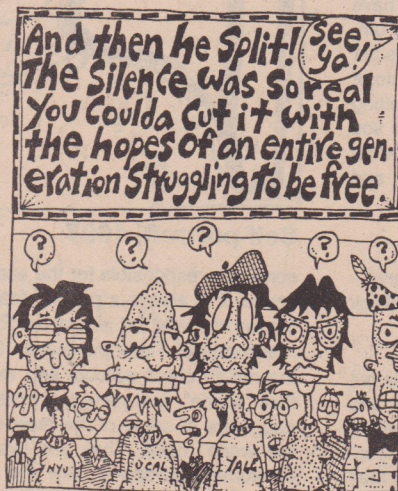
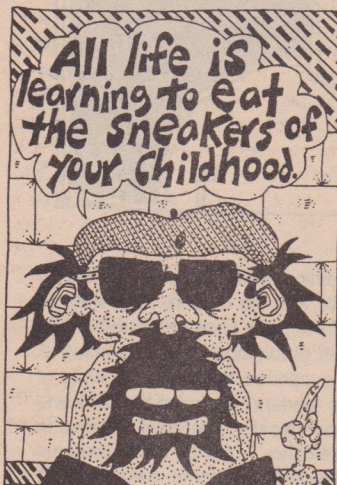
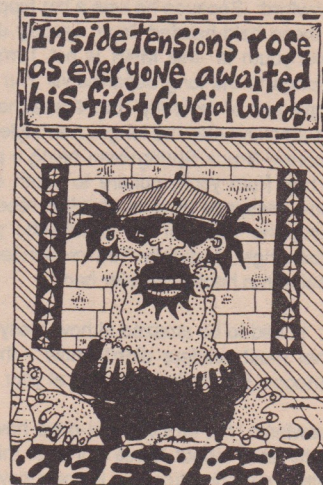
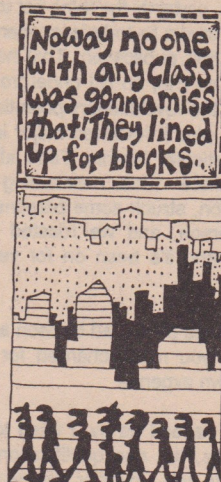
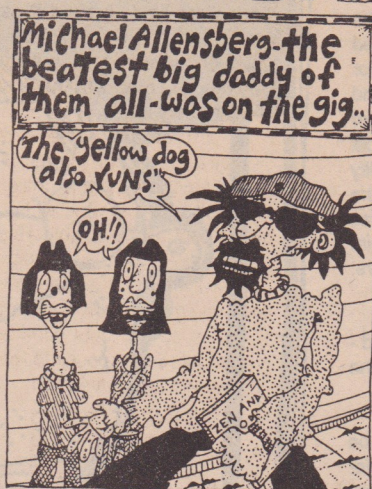


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baboon dooley



Witness to BEATNIK GLORY!



it is big, it has become offensive to the radical pretensions to those that made it that way. I've always found such things to be fascinating, and I try to incorporate them in my strips. I offer no apologies.

Oh, one other thought here. To view labels such as Lookout as being "big" is possible, but you have to be awfully small to see them that way.

Q: How do you stay involved with what you're writing about? I'm sure you're in the same boat I am - all your friends your own age aren't into punk anymore - so how do you keep in touch?

Crawford: It's pretty much by default, actually. I've worked in independent record distribution and other parts of that "ahem" industry for quite awhile now so I really don't have much of a choice. I sell the stuff over the phone, so I have to stay informed. The music is great; but as I said before what really excites me about the whole thing is the absurdity of some of the claims that are made for what is basically a boutique middle and upper class counterculture. The potential for satire is immense, I'm only surprised we haven't seen a movie about it yet. Look at what National Lampoon did to the hippies in the early 70s. I think we're at that point now with this one. Needless to say, it's a cartoonist's paradise.

Q: How would you compare the punk scene of today (and define "punk" any way you want) with what you remember from the early Eighties?

Crawford: The Punk scene of our early days was much less organized and a lot more spontaneous. Certainly a lot more free. The definitions and rules which came later were not yet in place and therefore people were less likely to experience much of the gang-up mentality you find in the punk rock world today. Countercultures go through stages of development, the first being the actual creation of a new idea, which is when some rare visionary or two comes along and invents something so compelling that thousands feel the need to imitate it. The final stage, which is what we're in now, is when some badly redefined truncated version of that original vision becomes a hidebound code of group behavior.

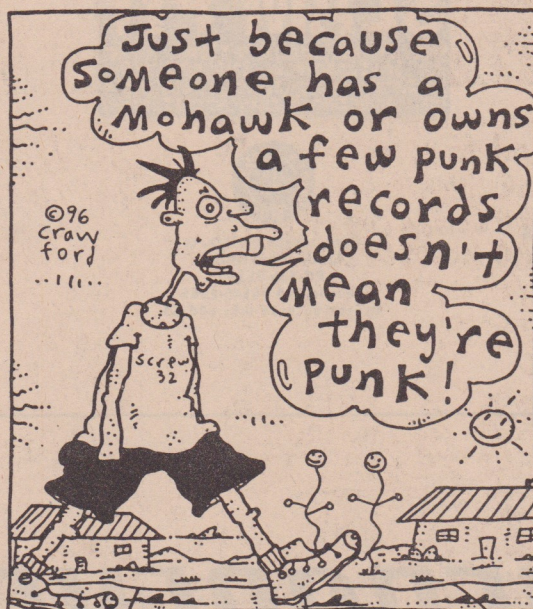
Funny thing about rebellions, they usually end up becoming just as repressive as whatever it was they were originally rebelling against. I think the role countercultures play in our society in these here days is as a kind of transition zone for adolescents. Kids grow up in a socialist society where their daily schedules and needs are dictated by local and national government agencies. It's called the public school system. As agonizingly boring as they are, public schools are a society to those stuck in them, one with very clearly defined rules and codes of behavior. Then, when you hit 18, you are freed and forced to enter an extremely different world, that of the free enterprise system. Very little is defined, nobody much gives a shit what you do or tells you where to go, and you are forced to either succeed or perish. For some this is a terrible shock and they feel the need to return to a safer world where things are more clearly defined. I think for a lot of scene folks this is the role punk plays in their lives.

Q: Most people experience punk as a phase they grow into and out of within a few years... yet here we both are, still going like the damn Energizer Bunny. What keeps you going after all these years?

Crawford: It's all about my gig. My wife, observant and wise soul that

she is, once pointed out to me that she felt the reason I keep drawing cartoons for the punk press is because I hate my job. And while I don't agree with her completely, she does have a point. After peddling the stuff for ten or so years, some of the glamour has worn off. The opportunity to publicly air my grievances with cruel fate in a public forum is not something all workers have the chance to do. Car salesmen seeking the joys of a bad attitude session have no Car-sellers Underground Press to make fun of all those annoying customers in. I do, and I do appreciate the chance. Punk is very much an industry and, in spite of the squawks of the DIY crowd, is very much in tune with the economy of the 90s.

Microbrew beers challenge Bud and Miller; Saturn, even though it is part of the same corporation, challenges Chevy; Kamel cigarettes challenge Camel; Starbucks challenges Maxwell House. And independent labels challenge Warner Brothers and Sony. Boutique industries are the all he rage these days. Punk is an industry that is packaged and sold as a non-industry. That is to say, its main commercial appeal and image is that it is not commercial, and that the consumer of it is therefore expressing a form of individuality by consuming it. Very 90s, expressing one's individuality by consuming the fruits of interstate commerce. Corporate conformity co-opts or even creates a response to the very problems it helped to create, and profits from the transaction.



Q: Are there any particular moments in the last 15 years that stand out? Any strips that you are particularly proud of?

Crawford: Yeah, the Beardo the Weirdo strips. I knew I was onto something because even Al Quint printed one. Al of course having one of the most sensitive bullshit radars in punk today. The 2 page Beardo strip, "Do You Really Want To Be Free, Punk? Or Are You Just Looking For Something To Replace High School?" is the one I am most proud of. Pretty much sums up my viewpoint these days. "Tales of Beatnik Glory" from 1985 is another.

Q: Do you get a lot of mail from readers; and if so, what do they have to say?

Crawford: I used to, that is before I closed my p.o. box. I don't like to give out my home address because, let's face it, a 3 am visit from some rodeo clown is not very high up on my list of enjoyable leisure-time activities. But when I did get mail it was mostly very positive. I've met many good folks over the years, a lot of them I'm still in contact with.

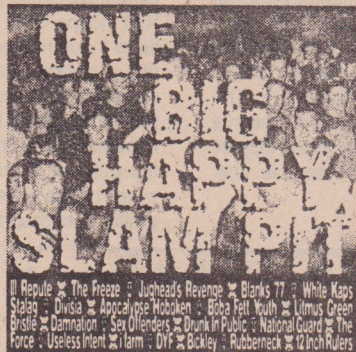
Q: (John made this question up himself because he has always wanted to be asked it.) "Imus or Howard Stern?"

Crawford: Imus all the way. One of the great things to happen out here in LA is you can now get Imus on the radio. Howard is tired, he hasn't come up with anything new in years. He's becoming the Chevy Chase of drivetime. Did you get a chance to catch Imus when he completely destroyed the Washington Press Dinner last year? It's been known ever since as 'the speech from hell.' You have to admire a guy who will say anything that he wants to no matter how controversial or potentially offensive. Even to the President of the United States.

Q: What do you see being the big story of 1997?

Crawford: The Yankees repeat. It's a lock.

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By Jim Testa

Very little about Hoboken remains unchanged from a dozen years ago -except Sexpod.

Not that the three-woman group hasn't enjoyed its share of permutations and growth. But way back in the early Eighties, when guitarist/vocalist Karyn Kuhl, bassist Alice Genese, drummer Tia Sprocket, and long-departed guitarist Mike Korman first started wailing away together in a band called Gutbank, they forged a heavy Hard Rock sound inspired by the arena-rock gestalt of Led Zeppelin. And here they are in 1997, with a different name and a new full-length album, still rocking out just as hard as ever.

sexpod

Q: Let's talk about the new album, *Goddess Blues*. It's on Slab Records, which I understand is part of Concrete Marketing.

Karyn: That's right.

Q: And just for anyone who doesn't know, Concrete is a really big force in... I don't know, do they still use the word 'metal'?

Alice: No, it's 'Hard Music' now.

Q: So how did that happen?

Alice: It happened at SXSW. That was their first introduction to us, I guess that was two years ago. It was kinda funny, because at the time we had no money and we didn't know who they were, so when they came up and asked for a record after our show, I made them buy one. And the guy gave us his card, and he turned out to be very persistent. He just started coming to show after show after show. And they've been very supportive.

Q: The album sounds great, but it really took a while. You must have had enough songs for a full-length years ago.

Alice: Well, we did put out an EP. We had enough songs to do an album but we decided to do an EP for Go-Kart. I guess it was a budget thing at the time but I think it was a good thing, looking back. We've progressed. We put out a single, then we put out an EP, now we have a full-length CD. I guess a double-album is next.

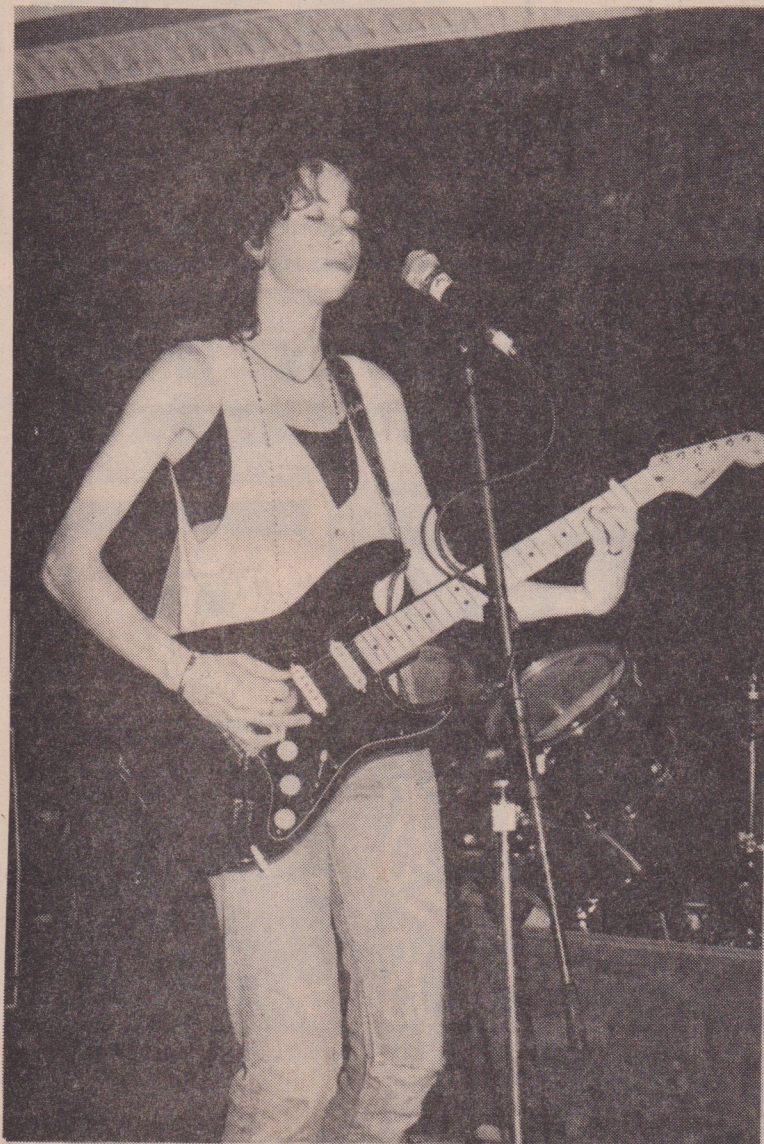
Q: The new album sounds a little looser. Some of the songs border on being silly. Is that a reflection of any sort of changes that you were going through? Karyn writes most of the lyrics, right?

Karyn: The silly ones they wrote, I wrote all the other ones. (laughs) I think it's good to have a sense of humor amidst all the seriousness and suffering.

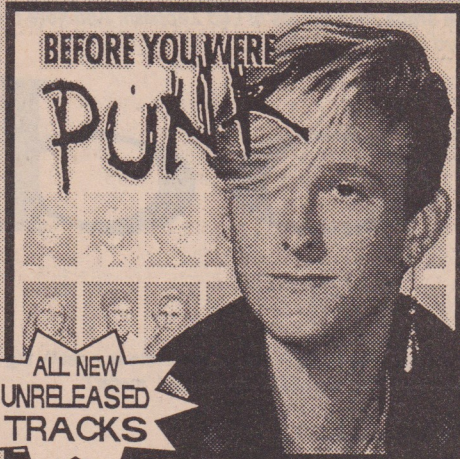
Q: The last time we talked, which was a few years ago when Sexpod was just getting started, you were saying how much tougher the club scene had become, how much more dog-eat-dog, since you were in Gutbank in the mid-Eighties. How are things going for you now?

Karyn: It's changed a lot since then. For the better. We have a lot more friends now than we did the last time we talked. There's more of a scene. We get a lot of support.

Tia: And not only that, but we actually like the music of



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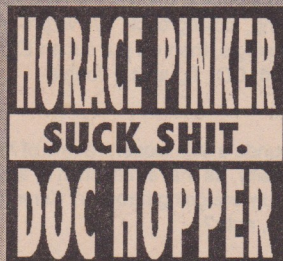
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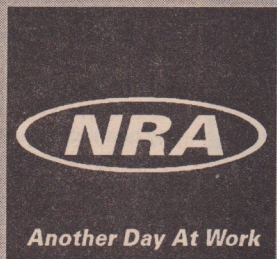
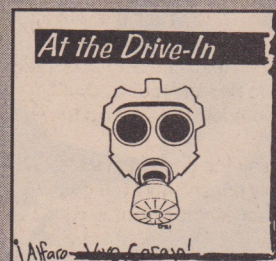
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the other bands we're playing with.

Karyn: From the time Sexpod started to now, it's definitely changed a lot.

Alice: There are people now who are running clubs that really support and understand what we do, and what other bands do in that same scene. So there's a lot of push.

Q: In the past, you've always been known as a Hoboken band so we should probably be clear that the support you're talking about is pretty much in New York City.

Karyn: Yes. We hardly ever play Hoboken anymore.

Alice: Hoboken's changed too much. I grew up here and I just can't believe what it's turned into. Even Maxwells. I was at a show there recently to see some friends play and I was in the front room. I just looked around and really, really freaked out. I didn't know one person. I used to go to Maxwells and I'd know everybody. And it was pod people. It was the invasion again. Not to say that those people are bad or anything. I just can't relate to the whole Wall Street - Yuppie - Buy the designer beer thing. They even asked us to play recently and I just said no. We just felt, what's the point? We don't have anything in common with what's going on there anymore.

Q: That raises another point I wanted to bring up. In the past, there's always been a certain stereotyping that any all-female band had to endure, and this new scene that you've fallen into pretty much avoids all that.

Karyn: People are definitely evolving into talking about was sex somebody is, or how amazing it is that there are three females in the band and they can all play. People are moving past gender and stereotypes and it's a really good thing. It's very positive.

Q: That's especially true for the shows like Squeezebox and Fraggie Rock where you're never really sure what anybody's gender is anyway.

(Everybody laughs)

Tia: We were up on stage one night - I think it was the P-Funk show that Karyn and I played at Fraggie Rock - and somebody in the crowd said, 'Are those all guys?' (more laughter) That's great. Because I think the confusion leads us right back to what it's supposed to be - the music. Don't pay attention to who's playing, just enjoy yourself and listen to the music.

Q: I think the pendulum's also swung back to heavier stuff, which certainly doesn't hurt you guys. It used to be that if people used 'Led Zeppelin' to describe you, it was an insult.

Karyn: It's okay that we had to wait 10 years for the world to catch up to us. It's fine. We knew it would happen.

Alice: Right. We didn't give up. We could've quit.

Q: It really is amazing that musically, what you're doing now isn't all that different from what you were doing in Gutbank. You've known what you wanted to do musically since you were... how old?

Karyn: Very young. (laughs) Yeah, whatever it is when the three of us work together, the essence of it is still the same. The music has changed. The songwriting, the playing, the singing, everything. But the basic essence, the soul of the music, is still there.

Q: I think you're a classic example of why there are almost no bad trios. There's something about that configuration that just works for a rock band. It's like a triangle, each side equally supporting the other.

Karyn: The triangle is one of the purest and most fundamental symbols. The base rooted firmly in the earth and the pinnacle pointing toward heaven. And that's what we are. (laughs.)

Alice (laughing): And the angels come out and sing.

Q: I guess another big advantage you have is that being together so long, you know that if you disagree over something, you can fight about it and know that it's not going to be the end of the world.

Alice: We can usually work anything out. It's hard to be in a relationship like this. I feel like I have two wives. But our friendship's grown and blossomed, and I think that shows in the music too. I think our music is very honest and it's very soulful. I think it comes from a very deep place and I think it comes from a place out in the heavens. And you have to feel good about that.

Karyn: I think some of it comes from Hell too. (laughs)

Q: Speaking of touring, what's on the agenda.

Karyn: Everything's up in the air right now. We're really frustrated.

Karyn: We're going to be touring but we don't know when or how it's going to come about.

Tia: And we're thinking about management, since we've been self-managed for so long. And getting a booking agent. You know, stuff that regular bands need to have, instead of doing it all ourselves.

Alice: Yes. We've decided to be a regular band.

Karyn: From now on, we're pretending to be professional.

GUTBANK

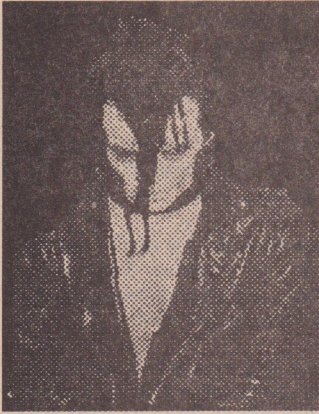


From Jersey Beat #19, January 1985

'Gut Bank is one of the few bands that's mastered that Lower East Side, sonic anguish, scream-till-you-puke intensity while eschewing the artsy junk. The band's songs work because they're (a.) movers (no Swansong sludge;) (b.) humorous (check your NYU art student pretensions at the door;) and (c.) melodic (as in actual songs buried in the noise.)' - Jim DeRogatis

From Jersey Beat #30, March 1987

'It's noise for the reckless noise of it all, with shakes of garage, thrash, and demented pop throughout... Most remarkable about this record is its sedative effect, which lifts you out of the mundane and everyday, and makes you want to just sit & stare.' - Karen Schoemer



MISFITS

By Jim Testa

It's been twenty years since the birth of the Misfits, and they still walk among us.

Fifteen years after the group officially broke up, they're still arguably the most popular, influential, imitated, bootlegged, and important rock band to crawl from the swamps of New Jersey and take on the world. Which is totally amazing, considering how goofy the whole concept was to begin with — a bunch of guys with big muscles and floppy forelocks welding thrash-rock riffarama to high-concept lyrics about zombies, Martians, and B-movie monsters.

And yet, to this day, you can't go to a punk show anywhere in the country without spotting a few kids who weren't even born when the band broke up proudly wearing their Misfits t-shirts. The Misfits aren't just a rock and roll band anymore, they're icons, as American and punk rock as pizza and skateboards.

The past year has been a virtual onslaught of Misfitsmania — a hugely popular box set of the band's old material, a tribute album featuring some of punk's biggest names, and soon, a new album by the reborn Misfits on Geffen Records.

For years, Glen Danzig claimed ownership of the Misfits name and back catalog, even while pursuing his career in Samhain and Danzig. But Jerry Only and Doyle never stopped being Misfits, showing up at trade shows and record conventions

in full regalia, and fighting a legal battle to reclaim the mantle. That struggle finally ended in 1995, and a new incarnation of The Misfits was born: Jerry Only and his brother Doyle on bass and guitar, Dr. Chud on drums, and Michael Graves on lead vocals. Same demonic sneers, same big muscles, some crazy haircuts. A new album, *American Psycho*, is scheduled to be released on Geffen in May.

Armed with a well-sharpened wooden stake, a supply of silver bullets, and our favorite crucifix, we tracked Jerry down and asked about the band that refuses to die.

Q: The original Misfits broke up on Halloween night, 1983, and from what I understand, this incarnation of the band made its debut on Halloween, 1995.

Jerry: Yeah. We did a special guest appearance with the guys from Type O Negative.

Q: I guess the first thing we need to discuss is how you got to use the name Misfits again and what exactly happened between you guys and Glen Danzig.

Jerry: When the band split up, I wasn't too concerned with what was happening with the band, and it slipped away on me. And Caroline



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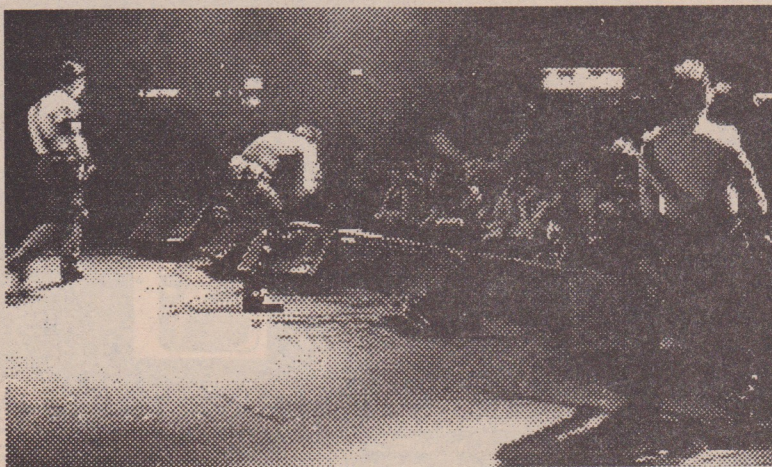
Records started putting out a whole bunch of stuff with Glen. And when we started looking into it, those records were shitty re-mixes and, for instance, on the *Legacy Of Brutality* reissue that came it, it wasn't even me playing bass. So I went through the roof. This is absurd. And at the time, we were working for our father in a machine shop, working on guitar designs and so on. And it just took so long to take legal action. We tried to talk it out first, and that didn't work. And it just got worse and worse and escalated. Caroline just kept putting out more and more releases, and we had nothing to say about it, about the songs or the artistic design. If you look at the packaging of the early Caroline releases, it's real cheesy and if you open it up, it's a picture of Glen. So we finally threatened to take it to court, and it never actually got to court but we came to an agreement. The box set that came out was a result of us getting in there and having our say. And what happened was we let go of all the old publishing, even though we had helped write it. You'll never read that anywhere, but we don't care. We weren't in it for songwriting credits, we were in it to write great songs. So we gave up the publishing to get the name free and clear and be able to go ahead.

The idea behind it was that Doyle and I had great ideas and we didn't want to limit ourselves to a *Static Age*, *Walk Among Us*, and an *Earth A.D.* album. We didn't consider that the extent of our career. Our career was to keep moving forward and continue getting better as we went. So we wrote this new album and Geffen came along and the opportunity came at just the right time for us to put out what I consider to be the best Misfit album of all. And that's where we stand now.

Q: When you guys first got together, where did the whole monster idea come from?

Jerry: When we first got together, I was 17 and Doyle was 12. What you don't know is that originally, we were very artsy. We were in the avant-garde. Glen was really into Alan Vega and Suicide, and he was writing keyboard stuff along those lines. Now here's some news. Caroline is having the *Static Age* album coming out on its own and there's a song on there that hasn't been played in 20 years. We just heard the tapes and it came out really good. So you'll be able to hear a little of that.

But yeah, when we started, we were playing audition nights at CBGB for free and Glen was playing keyboards and we were like a lounge act. The monster thing happened when we started playing Max's Kansas City. The first poster we did was from something like *Teenagers From Mars*. It had a picture of a skeleton that had been shot with a raygun or something on it. We used that as our first Max's poster. And then on our second Max's poster, we stumbled across the *Crimson Ghost*. And once we used that, God, it caught on so quick that everything we did after that just got more and more monster-oriented. And that's how we got into the image we have today. And what's beautiful is that working with Geffen, we're able to



The original Misfits, from a 1981 flyer

utilize all the old Universal monsters. So it's good to be able to use Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi and Frankenstein and use all those images with our name over the top. It's always been a dream of mine.

Q: Has it ever surprised you how enduringly popular the Misfits songs have been? I can never remember a time in the last 15 years when kids didn't like the Misfits, no matter what else they were listening to.

Jerry: You have to remember the framework. I was born in 1959, which was pretty much the beginning of rock and roll, with Buddy Holly and that stuff. And that's what I grew up listening to. And the Misfits was based on that kind of music. If you listen to it, it's a lot of Fifties stuff. But we had a Nineties sound back then and it's still the same now. It's just basic American home-fries rock and roll chord progressions, and you just love 'em. You're just so damn used to them that you know them as soon as you hear them.

That's why I think we're more a rock and roll band than a punk band. A lot of friends were telling me a year ago that the whole punk era was coming back and we ought to jump on it, and I said no. The last thing I want was to come out and be just another early punk band to come back for a revival. This is about much more. We stand for much more than that, I think, than just being categorized. And I think the music shows that. You've got "American Nightmare," which is almost a rockabilly song, and then "London Dungeon," which is slow and eerie, and then things like "Queen Wasp" and "Earth A.D.," which is like speed-metal bible material. The biggest movies of the year are always science fiction movies, whether it's *The Terminator* or *Alien* or *Independence Day* or whatever. Because you're using your imagination, which enables you to make anything possible. That's why science fiction is always so popularity, and that's the kind of elements we have going. That's our topic material.

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Q: So the new stuff is like that too?

Jerry: Even more so! Lyrically, we don't have any swear words on the album, which I think is big. And we don't have any guitar leads. It's just flat-out balls to the walls rock and roll. And the lyrics are fantastic. And the production is the best we've ever had. We had six months to put it together, and that's about six months more than I ever had to do an album before.

We did this panel with a six person panel. The four of us, and a guy from Geffen, and Daniel Rey, who produced it, and every week we would update our lyrics, if someone didn't like a line that person would go home and work on it. We wrote 35 songs and tracked 20. There has to be a thousand hours of songwriting time invested in this project. In twenty years, we never put this much time and energy and attention into writing songs.

Daniel was a good choice for producer. He's got a real Fifties feel for the material like I do. Like he's working right now with Ronnie Spector and Joey Ramone on a new Ronnie Spector album. And the other good thing is that he's a calm individual, where we're a bunch of maniacs. He's like the buffer zone between everybody. We weren't used to doing things with so much going on. We did *Walk Among Us* for \$3,000 in three days. It's a totally different atmosphere. So it was good having him as producer. And I really liked it. I think that creatively you have a much better chance of getting where you want to go if everybody has a say, rather than having one guy be a dictator and tell everybody else what to do.

My one fear with signing to a label like Geffen is that I didn't want to get involved with some big money-making corporation that was going to drain all the gusto out of my band. But they've been terrific. The deal with Geffen is that we do everything and they just put it out. So we designed the artwork and we recorded everything pretty much the way we wanted to. We did an 8 hour photo shoot yesterday and we just kept playing the tape of the album over and over. I just kept wanting to hear it again.

For me, it's like when the box set came out. When that came out, I cried. I really did. I tell everybody that for the last ten, twelve years, we had really great stuff on tape, but Caroline wasn't getting great stuff to put out, they were getting garbage. Like *Earth A.D.* I know if I could go into a studio and take my time and re-mix *Earth A.D.*, it could be a great album, because we had great stuff on tape that nobody ever heard. I mean, now, I give it a B, but when *Earth A.D.* first came out, I gave it an F. It was a fucking failure as an album. The idea at the time was that *Earth A.D.* was gonna be the Misfits meet Motorhead. Because the Misfits during the *Walk Among Us* era were doing more doo wop material. But then we heard Motorhead and they were doing all this radical, fast shit, and we wanted to take their speedmetal sound and put it to our Fifties-type progressions. But we broke up before that came out and Glen really put that out. And he slept while we did. He was sleeping when we recorded most of it and he didn't know what was on those tapes. We could've done ten times better with *Earth A.D.* than what came out.

Q: Have you heard the tribute compilation (*Violent World: A Tribute To The Misfits* on Caroline)?

Jerry: Yeah, I like the first song and the last song. The rest I wasn't crazy about, but all those bands have their own interpretations. The last song on the compilation is "Return Of The Fly" [by Farside] and that's the shit. Even Doyle liked it and Doyle don't like nothing.

But he heard it and he's like, this sounds like it was the original and then we covered it. (laughs) And we're doing an Iggy song, "I Got A Right," for a compilation that's going to support Lifebeat. We used to do it live and Glen always hated doing it, but now we have an arrangement and Doyle has a guitar part for it, so we're recording it. It's cool. I just hope Iggy likes it when he hears it.

As far as the compilation, since Glen has 100 per cent of the publishing, they didn't have to talk to us about it, and I would have liked to have had some input. Type O Negative wanted to do a song, Anthrax wanted to do a track, Life Of Agony wanted to do one, all the guys we were hanging with wanted to throw something on there and we didn't have any say. And the artwork! We could have come up with some really good artwork. What they put together was political artwork. It completely misses the point. "Violent World" isn't about kids throwing rocks.

Q: What are the plans for the new album?

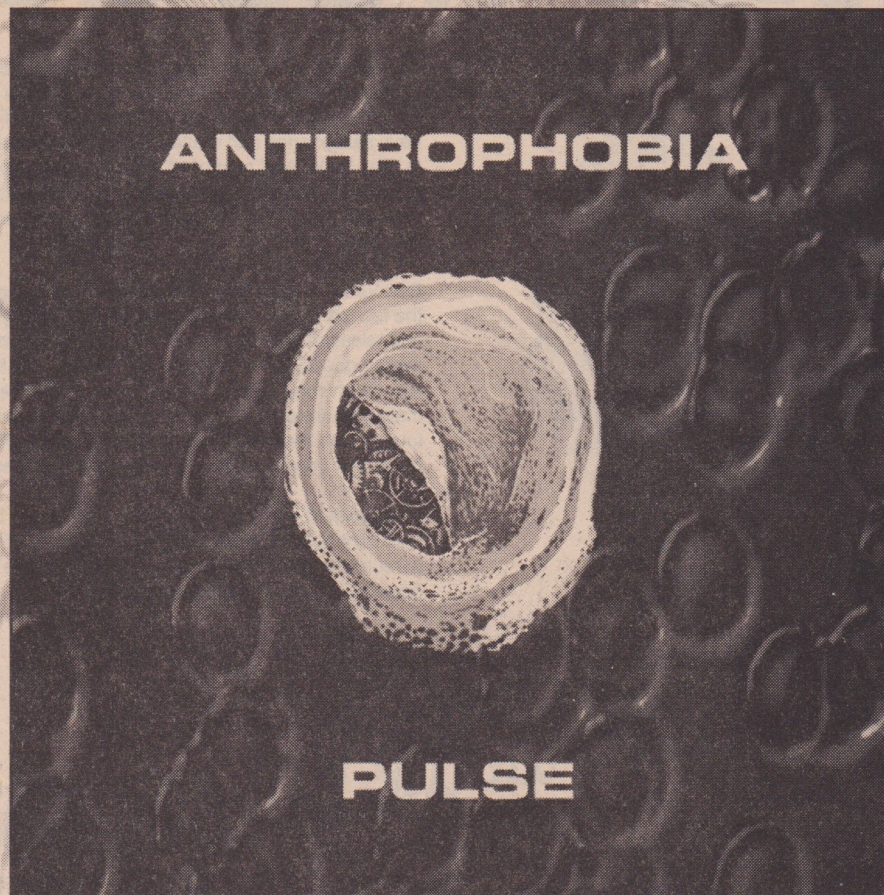
Jerry: We're going to Europe first. Then we invested in a mobile home so we can do America. We think with the mobile home we can just do good shows on weekends and concentrate on that, getting the word out and playing good shows in major cities. That way we can get a lifting workout going during the week and play good shows on the weekends. Our tour is supposed to start in June and go all the way through to October.



Jerry Only, 1983

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up and down and smiled all the time and played the most amazing, exuberant, energetic, smile-inducing rock'n'roll tunes. They weren't scary like the Ramones or heroin addicts like Television, they didn't have saxophones and dress in black like the trendy No Wave crowd in New York. And best of all, to those of us lucky enough to be there, they were ours. People started talking about Hoboken as "the new Liverpool." We all started thinking we were going to take over the world.

Of course, it didn't turn out that way. The Bongos signed to RCA, the first band from the Maxwells scene to achieve that milestone, and released "Numbers With Wings." Although it sounded a bit overproduced, it was still Bongos music. But the band followed with *Beat Hotel*, an album that drastically altered the simple, minimalist pop tunes that we had all fallen in love with. They started touring with a keyboardist and percussionist. And they toured so much that they almost never played Hoboken anymore.

Disappointed with the response to *Beat Hotel*, the Bongos got out of their contract with RCA and flew to Compass Point in the Bahamas to record an album for Island. Those sessions have never been released. It was the beginning of the end.

Where have all the Bongos gone?

By Jim Testa

How important were the Bongos in my life? Let's just say that without the Bongos, there never would have been a *Jersey Beat*.

For one thing, it was the Bongos - along with Glenn Morrow, now of Bar None Records - who first persuaded Steve Fallon to let them play in his bar back in 1978. The band - Richard Barone, Morrow, Rob Norris, and Frank Giannini - was called "a," and the bar was called Maxwells.

By the time I discovered what was happening there in 1980 or '81, "a" had split into two bands - the Bongos and Morrow's group, the Individuals - and Maxwells had become the center of a full-blown pop music renaissance. The club quickly became the weekend haunt of a small but passionate clique of writers, musicians, and artists. I had been to CBGB to see the Ramones but I never felt like I belonged there. Maxwells was my little secret, my first taste of cool - and I just had to tell people about. Besides, I had always wanted to be a writer anyway. That's how I started doing a fanzine.

Our little secret didn't last long. Bands from all over the country moved to Hoboken to take advantage of the cheap rents and become part of the scene. And in the center of it all were the Bongos, three (later, with the addition of Jim Mastro, four) guys who jumped

Jim Mastro left the group first, forming a new combo called Strange Cave. The Bongos announced they were going on hiatus, and lead singer Richard Barone explored a new, more mature direction with his first solo album *Cool Blue Halo*, creating a kind of symphonic pop that presaged the MTV "Unplugged" era with its rich use of strings and acoustic guitars.

Barone would go on to record two more solo albums - *Primal Dream* and *Clouds Over Eden* - in the same style. Mastro's Strange Cave would sputter and fall apart after trying unsuccessfully to land another major label deal. After nearly giving up music, he rediscovered his enthusiasm with The Health & Happiness Show, exploring folk and country music, and who record for Hoboken's Bar None Records. Frank Giannini played in a succession of other bands, including the delightful children's music unit Over The Moon created by Sexpod's Alice Genese and the Cucumbers' Deena Shoskes, but is now out of music. Rob Norris continues to write and record, but at his home studio, for himself; he is also a licensed massage therapist.

After a short hiatus following *Clouds Over Eden* ("that record really completed a cycle for me," he says,) Richard Barone re-emerged on the New York scene as the co-host of "Writers In The Round,

this is now

Bluebird Style," a series of monthly concerts at The Bottom Line nightclub based on the singer-songwriter get-togethers at Nashville's Bluebird Café. Barone and co-host Jules Shear share the stage each month with different songwriters, each taking a turn at the mike to perform a few of their songs, sometimes solo and sometimes harmonizing with the other performers. The evening ends with an old-fashioned hootenanny, in which the entire ensemble salutes some recently deceased songwriter. At the February show, for instance, the guests included ex-dB Peter Holsapple and his wife Suzy Cowsill, and Terri Roche of The Roches, who joined Shear and Barone in a spirited r&b rendition of the late Richard Berry's "Louie Louie."

I tracked Richard down to his cozy West Village apartment shortly after that show to ask the musical question, "Where have all the Bongos gone..."

RICHARD BARONE

Q: I remember you always used to say that you hated being called "bubbly" and "irrepressible," because that's how writers would always describe you in the Bongos. But I have to say after seeing the Writers In The Round show the other night that you really haven't changed.

RB: Well, thank you, that's really nice. And it's all right, I like being called that now.

Q: How did the series come about?

RB:: In February of '96, the Bottom Line asked me to do the show 'In Their Own Words,' which Vin Scelsa had started. He doesn't do it anymore. Now, the format of that show is almost like a talk show. A lot of talking about each song. I had a good time, but after the

show, Alan Pepper, who owns the Bottom Line, asked me what I thought. He's very involved creatively with the club, and that's one of the reasons why the club has been so successful for so long. So he asked me how I liked it and what I would differently if it were my show, and I said that I would have more music, less talking, more collaboration. I'd have the guests rehearse before the show so it's not like they're meeting for the first time there. I thought that was a bit cold. And I thought it would be good if there was no moderator, just all artists. And also, I said no script, no questions. And I said that if it were me, I'd like to do it with a partner, so there'd be some kind of chemistry going. And Alan really surprised me, because I hadn't seen this coming, but he said why don't I go ahead and put something together.

So I suggested Jules Shear, because between the two of us we've worked with so many different songwriters that it would cover a lot of ground. So instantly there'd be some rapport, because we could ask people we both already knew from different areas. And musically, I thought it could be really flexible if it was he and I. And Jules was into it as soon as I talked to him, so we put the show together and we've been doing it since April, '96. So the March 21 show will end our first year's worth of shows.

It's been a lot of fun for me. It's both looser and yet I have to be on the ball, because it has to be spontaneous. It's fun working without a net. It's fun working without a set list. In the Bongos and also as a solo artist I've always been pretty structured about how shows were put together. I would never just say, 'Any requests?' Well, now I do. At the last show we did, I didn't know what I was going to play, and people were yelling out titles, and I just did one of them. It's been really free for me.

So far, it's been really successful. The club has been happy with it. It's just a word of mouth thing, they don't advertise it separately, but it's been catching on.

Q: Has working with so many talented songwriters been inspiring?



BONGOS



Richard Barone, 1997

RB: Very much so. In fact, it's really gotten me focused on my own songwriting. That show has been making me very disciplined about my writing, because I try to have one new song ready to try out for every show. And I've also been doing a film score, which is the first time I've written specifically for a film. It's called *Next Year In Jerusalem*. I just finished the title song and some little instrumental bits, and there are a few songs I wrote with Jill Sobule that will be in the film. And now I'm writing instrumental passages for the incidental background music.

Q: I know you've also been writing with George Usher.

RB: I've always worked with George, starting back in '86 or so. I love writing with him. What's funny is that one of the first songs we wrote together was "River To River" which is on my Primal Dream album, and I just heard a house version of it. It's a new dance music artist named Billy Joe Crawford. It's deep house, deep deep deep. It was amazing to hear it. And the song is still intact.

I've also been writing a lot with Jill Sobule. The first single from her new album is a song we wrote together called "Bitter."

Q: When you collaborate, is there usually a strict, you do the lyrics and I'll do the music, or is it...

RB: Oh no. It's totally collaborative. A lot of it has to do with faxes and phone machines. Because when I'm working on a song, the initial idea is often very immediate, but then the details, the tailoring of it, takes a little while. And a lot of them gets done with lots of phone calls back and forth. But it's both, it's music and lyrics.

Q: If you were filling out a job application and you came to the question, "Occupation," what would you answer these days?

RB: Triple threat. Because I really like producing too. I got back into producing last year when I produced Fred Schneider (of the B52's) for that Nilsson tribute comp. He asked me out of the blue and it got me back to wanting to produce other artists. And since then, I've worked with other artists and I've started my own production company to work with people that I think I can help. And also some established artists. Right now, I'm producing this guy Lach, who does the anti-folk shows on the Lower East Side.

So I'm a producer, and I do see myself as a songwriter. I do take that seriously. With a laugh, because it's so much fun, but I do take that seriously. And then of course there's performing. Right now, the main outlet for my performances is the Bottom Line shows, because I'm enjoying staying in New York right now. I spent ten years on the road. When the Bongos broke up, I toured Europe three or four times, I was almost never in New York. So after *Clouds Over Eden*, that ended a cycle for me. When I came home from that last tour, I thought that I just wanted to stay home for a while. I wanted to establish a home. I wanted to be based in New York again, not just living on an airline somewhere.

Q: I'll be honest, I haven't seen you perform in a while and when you started singing at that Bottom Line show, I heard your voice and it brought back so many good memories.

RB: Thank you.

Q: You've got a special quality to your voice, it's hard to explain but you can get away with a lot of things that most male singers wouldn't be able to do.

RB: Maybe it's because the material is so natural to me. I know what you mean. My voice is not typical and I kind of like that. And I try to do as much with it as I can. But I also love singing with other people, which is another reason why the Bottom Line shows are so much fun for me.

Q: Do you think about the Bongos days much?

RB: Oh sure. It was so great doing that reunion show last May. But as much as I really liked those days, I also really feel that moving forward is important. There are times when there's been the temptation to call the other guys up and say, let's just do another tour. But it would be exactly the opposite of the direction I'm going in right now. I'm trying to establish myself by staying here right now, and going off on a tour with be working against that. But I did like those days and I still like the records we made.

Q: Any regrets?

RB: About the Bongos? No. I think we stopped just at a time when we all felt that we needed to do other things. Jim wanted to develop his own writing more. The Bongos was based on my songwriting, so when Jim wanted to start writing more, it was natural that he leave the group. And I wanted to do the Cool Blue Halo project, which was

very different from the Bongos. But I just felt that that's what I needed to do then. I think everybody felt like they needed a break. Even though we were only together, what, maybe seven years, it was a very concentrated time, with a lot of touring, sometimes constantly. And it seemed like when we weren't on tour, we were in the studio. So that process just repeated itself constantly.

But it was great, and I learned a lot. I still apply what I learned in those days to any project I do now. I have no real regrets. It was a very good time, and we're all friends still. Jim seems very happy with what he's doing now.

Q: We've talked about that, and I think he's much happier now in the Health & Happiness Show than he was in the band before that, Strange Cave. Strange Cave got caught up in that major

JIM MASTRO

Jim Mastro was always 'the kid.' As a teenager, he was plucked from Roxbury High School in suburban New Jersey to play and tour with Richard Lloyd, who had just left Television and putting together a band for his first solo album. A few years later, Mastro became the fourth member of the Bongos, joining what was then the most popular and talked band in the high-flying Hoboken pop scene.

Now it's 15 later, and Mastro has kids of his own, as well as a successful indie-rock band called The Health & Happiness Show, a busy career as a producer, and, most recently, his own guitar store, The Guitar Bar on First Street in Hoboken. That's where we caught up with Jim to talk about the past and catch up on his present.

Q: One thing I've learned talking to guitar players over the years is that they never own enough stuff.

Jim: (laughs) Yeah, that's pretty true. I've always had a bed that was probably three feet higher off the ground than it should've been because I always had a bunch of guitars and stuff underneath it. And just from going out on the road and looking for stuff and buying stuff and bringing it home, my fear always was that I'd come home sometime and find it had all been thrown out. So I figured I'd better open up a store. So when I saw this place was available, I grabbed it, quick. I had toyed with the idea for a few years and this place is perfect. This place is Hoboken to me.

Q: Was having your own guitar store always a dream?

Jim: Not always. I got tired of having to go into New York all the time for guitar strings and stuff. And this kind of justifies me buying stuff. Now if I run across something that I just have to own, I can buy it and say it's for the store. So it's serving a dual purpose. Plus at this point it's kind of a community service. A *non-profit* community service organization for right now. (laughs) Like, I might know that someone is looking for a certain piece of equipment, and then I'll run across it. So I can buy it for the store and make it available at a good price. And that way, I always know where it is in case I want to borrow it sometime. (laughs) But it's been great. It's become kind of like Floyd's Barber Shop on the old Andy Griffith show. This whole host of characters just come in every day now to hang out and talk.

Q: It's funny, there's not much of what you could call a "scene" in Hoboken anymore but there sure are a lot of musicians.

Jim: I thought I knew every guitar player in town and that's just not true. My circle of friends is just the tip of it. It seems like everyone in Hoboken owns a guitar, or three. It's been amazing.

Q: Who are some of the people who have been in here? Anybody famous yet?

Jim: Well yeah. Bernie Leadon of the Eagles, their first lead guitar

player, came in and bought a guitar. Hung out for a long time and we talked. Freedy Johnston has been in here, Bob Mould has been in. John Hamilton (of Tiny Lights) is teaching guitar here. Jared Nickerson (of the Schramms) is teaching bass. Everyone who's in bands, when they're not on the road and they don't have work, they can come here and teach. So it's worked out kind of well. And it's certainly kept me busy when I'm not traveling.

Q: It's a great location too, near the PATH station. Have you been getting a lot of people coming over from New York?

Jim: We're starting to now. Word is starting to get around. They come here to take advantage of us country bumpkins.

Q: Are the prices better here than what you'd pay at those guitar stores on 48th Street?

Jim: Definitely. Certain things, the big stores can sell cheaper. But vintage-wise, with the guitars, I know we're a lot cheaper. In fact I have people yelling at me not to sell stuff so cheap. But I'm happy.

Q: You're here, and Steve Fallon owns a store right around the corner. Who would have guessed.

Jim: Yeah, but it's nice. Both of us have been here a really long time and both of us want to keep a little bit of the city the way it used to be. We don't want to see it turn into one big outdoor mall.



Jim Mastro at The Guitar Bar, Hoboken, 1997

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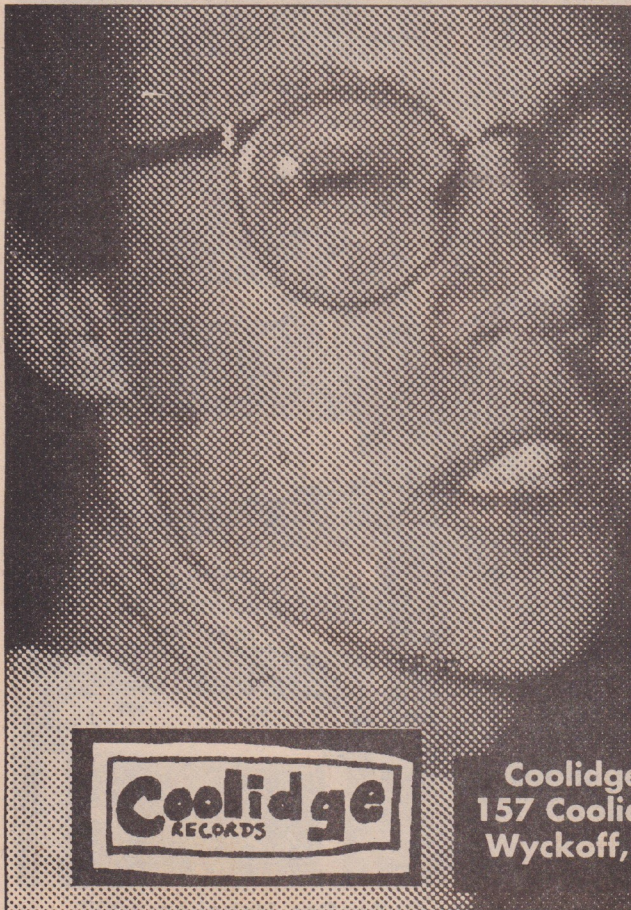
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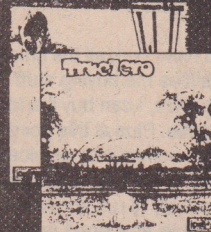
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Q: Everybody I've talked to for this issue has mentioned how much Hoboken has changed.

Jim: Well, it's going to. And it's going to keep changing. The younger kids who are here now are going to be complaining in ten years about how much it's changed, just like we are now. But that's what cities do, they change. Sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. And you just try to encourage what's better and the worst ones you try to correct.

Q: Meanwhile, the Health And Happiness Show seems to be doing very well. I see you playing out all the time.

Jim: Yeah, we slowed down a little. We were out on tour for a year and a half. I'm supposed to be writing songs and getting a new record together. I think sometime in the Spring we'll start recording. And I've been producing a bunch. I just finished the Tiny Lights record. I've been producing this girl named Debbie Schwartz, who was in the Aquanettas. She's got a deal with Mercury that will be on Joan Osborne's label. Joan Osborne has her own label deal now. So that's my tip, get a Grammy and you can have your own label. I'm doing this New York band called Rogue's March. And I'm working with this girl named Julia Greenberg, who's great also. So there are three or four things I want to finish up before we start making our record.

Q: You seem to have carved out a really nice life for yourself, but 15 years ago, could you have imagined we'd be sitting here having this conversation? I mean, I'm not doing anything that different from what I was doing back then, but...

Jim: Well, am I, really?

Q: I don't know. I think 15 years ago you might have had a little more ambition. I think maybe you saw at least the chance to become more of, for want of a better word, a rock star.

Jim: Ambition? If anything, it's multiplied. Opening this store was certainly ambitious, I did it all on credit cards. And the band is still going. And producing is taking off. I wish there was one more day in the week. I think I'm at the point where if I never actually made another record, it wouldn't bother me. I think I'll probably keep playing until someone kills me, but I kind of feel like on that level, I'm fine. I know we will make more records, but if I don't, well, I've accomplished what I wanted to do and I'd be fine with that. The business side of it is always kind of drag. I mean, there are definitely days when I'm not perfectly happy with my life.

Q: My point is that, well, there are a lot of young people getting started in music who read Jersey Beat, and I think a lot of them have the idea that either you become a big star, or you give up and go to work in your dad's business or something. And the truth is that you can carve out a very nice life for yourself without every becoming a big star or giving up your love of music.

Jim: Well, isn't that more ambitious really, than having everything handed to you? I've starved all these years, and I have a family now, and unfortunately they've suffered along with me. But they're great about it, and I'm happy. How do you measure success? By selling a million records, or just by being content with what you're doing? Was Kurt Cobain successful, really, in the long run?

You know, the Bongos did every level of touring. We did the van tours, we did the bus tours, and we flew to cities. And my favorites were the van tours. And The Health & Happiness Show, we were out in a big Chevy van, just four guys cruising around, and that was much more fulfilling to me than having the big crew and all that. It's just that much more personal, and more down to earth. I think there's an equation somehow that the higher up you sit in a vehicle, the higher up your ego goes too. So if you're way up there in a bus, you're constantly looking down on everyone. I've had a great time at this level.

Q: I remember when we did an interview after you had just started doing The Health & Happiness Show how happy you were. It seemed like you had really made peace with where you were and what you were doing with your life.

Jim: Yeah, it took a while, but I got there. When I was 18, I thought



The Bongos at Maxwells, 1983

I'd be a millionaire. I was playing with Richard Lloyd then and we made a record for Elektra. And I thought, wow, this is great, this is it, I'm set. And it was far from the truth. And the Bongos always came close and had these little brushes... So it takes a while. There are days when I'm probably not as at peace with myself as others. But overall I'm happy.

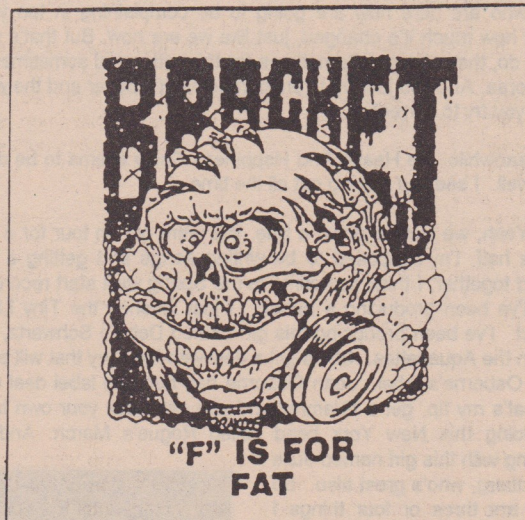
Q: Looking back 15 years, there must be a lot of good memories.

Jim: Oh yeah. The bad ones I forget. I have this built in editing system. (laughs) I mean, you can live your life in regret and remorse, but what's the use? So yeah, great memories. I've gotten to travel the country a bunch of times, and met some amazing people I've normally wouldn't have met. How can you say I'd do something different or I wish I'd done this or that? 'Cause it's over. But yeah, good memories.

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Q: What I remember most about those early days at Maxwells was the sense of camaraderie. You'd walk in the door and you'd know everyone there. I don't think there'll ever be anything like that again.

Jim: That's true. There are several reasons for that. Different crowd. Change of management. But I don't go out as much at my age, no one I know does. But I feel really lucky that we were here then. And that I was living in this area when the punk thing was just happening. That was an exciting time, and then it carried over to Maxwells. I don't know if there's been a scene like that since. Seattle in the early Nineties, maybe. But yeah, I have great memories. And the nights I can't remember were probably even better. I've been told I had a great time those years. (laughs)

But to go back to what we were saying, I think it's harder to get a feeling of camaraderie or intimacy these days. It's just the way communication works. There are no mysteries anymore, there are no secrets. When Maxwells first started, it was a great secret. This little place in Hoboken that had great bands. How did you find out

about it? Well, a friend told me. That's what it was like. Now, there's the Internet, MTV, whatever. Once something starts happening, we're flooded with information about it... So that sense of discovering something is harder and harder, because if you discover something nowadays, there's a thousand people right behind you doing it too. It gets harder and harder to be an explorer. At least in this area.

Q: You've been busy exploring another frontier anyway. Fatherhood, right?

Jim: Yeah, I have two little girls, 3 ½ and 1 years old. That was a huge change. How can you pretend to have an ego about what you're doing - I mean, you're just playing rock in a band, that's all it is - but how can you think it's anything spectacular when you have to come home and change a diaper? How can you let it go to your head? So that's kind of kept me on an even keel. It really equalizes your priorities. I still get to do what I love to do, but there's nothing like a dirty diaper to keep you humble after you've just played a great show somewhere.

ROB NORRIS

Bassist Rob Norris is the oldest Bongo and the one with the most impressive music biz credentials - he toured with the last-gasp incarnation of the Velvet Underground with Doug Yule. Rob opted out of the music industry rat race after the Bongos stopped playing together ("we never really officially broke up," he notes) and became a licensed massage therapist, which is how he earns a living. But his love of making music has, if anything, grown stronger since his days as a Bongo.

These days, he lives in a sprawling 8-room house in a wooded area of upstate New York, about 20 miles south of Woodstock. The house has its own recording studio, where Rob and his friends frequently get together to write, play, and record. Frank Giannini has been up to sit in on drums a few times.

"I still do massage for a living, and I still work in Hoboken a couple times a month, and the rest of the time I just immerse myself in music," Rob said. "I just finished an album of my own called *Morning Becomes Electric* and I'm helping several of my friends with albums and musical projects. And basically I just play a lot with all sorts of friends. My home is a sort of musical Mecca. I play more music than ever, actually, it just has virtually nothing to do with commerce. No money changes hands."

Rob isn't even sure yet if he'll release the album he's finished. "I'm thinking of just putting out a limited run and having an artist friend make the covers," he said. "Just give a few copies to friends. That'll be fine."

Like the other Bongos, Norris has no regrets about his close brush with the big time. "The happiest we were in the Bongos was 15 years ago when we were touring the country in my parents' mobile home. I think we did about 200 dates that year, in this little mobile home, and it was a wonderful adventure. And we got to keep all the money. It was only later, with all the tour bus stuff and the roadies... that was the death of us.

"When you get big, it's trouble," he added. "Like R.E.M. Those guys are miserable. It can fucking kill you. The other night I was watching a video of the Doors' Hollywood Bowl concert and I was very disturbed by it. There's this profoundly disturbed person up there, obviously in agony, and the other guys in the band are a part of it, basically functioning like some sort of Dionysian sacrifice. It's like this drama that has to play itself out and it's just so disturbing."

So instead, Rob has his big old house in the woods; filled with friends making music together and a beautiful massage room where he sees clients. "It's my Apollonian split," he said. "Apollo was the god of music and healing. He's my muse. I think they go together. Music is really one of the most healing things there is."

FRANK GIANNINI

For drummer Frank Giannini, the Bongos are a fond memory but his life has gone in another direction. "I'm in school again, studying to be an occupational therapist," he said. "School's been very rewarding for me, I'm really enjoying it. And I'm really excited about getting into this field." Married with two children, the youngest under a year old, Frank said that the time came when he had to make a decision about supporting his family. "I could have gone on playing in bands and working full-time as a housepainter to pay the bills, but that was a nightmare for me," he said. "It just came to a point where I had to decide what I wanted to do with my life. I still love music, I just don't feel any ambition to be a rock star anymore. I came to terms with that quite a few years ago. I do miss it, and if I could play drums and make a nice living and support my family, that's what I would do. But that's not what happens."



Chris Butler

How To Be A Self-Employed, Marvelously Successful Bohemian

By Jim Testa

The first time I can remember hearing Chris Butler's name was when he produced the third dB's album, *Like This*, in 1983. Back then, he was known around Hoboken as the guy who had written the Waitresses' big novelty new-wave hit, "I Know What Boys Like," and a lot of us wondered what he was going to do with our beloved dB's. But *Like This* turned out to be a brilliant record, and a lot of it had to do with the groove that Butler managed to cajole out of the post-Chris Stamey lineup.

Over the next dozen years, I'd come across Butler's name here and there. For instance, I read in the *Trouser Press Guide* that, prior to the Waitresses, he had been a member of Tin Huey, the seminal art-core ensemble that emerged from Kent State, Ohio at the same time as Pere Ubu and Devo. More recently, I discovered that Chris was living in Hoboken when tracks he had written and performed turned up on some local compilations.

Then, a few months ago, Chris Butler sent me a copy of his latest CD, *The Devil Glitch*, a mind-boggling accomplishment - a single 69-minute song with 550 different choruses, recorded in 2-3 minutes chunks by different friends and acquaintances and all cobbled together using the latest digital recording technology. (There's also a 5-minute radio-friendly version of the song on the disc.) That's when I knew I had to meet this guy.

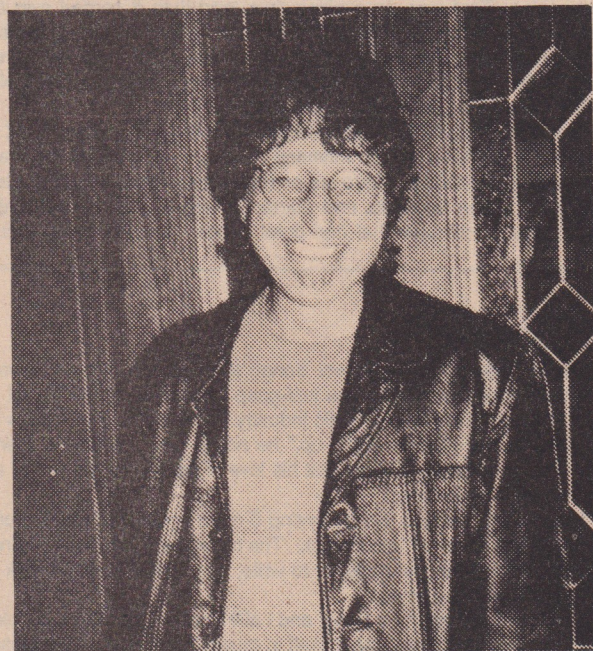
For some reason, I had pictured Butler has some sort of reclusive eccentric, a geezer from another era obsessed with these lunatic recordings (another ongoing project is a series of 7 inches Butler is recording using vintage, pre-audio tape technology.)

But when we finally got together, I discovered the real Chris Butler - a bright, witty, charming, and totally down-to-earth guy with an active, ongoing interest in pop culture. Far from being a recluse, Chris still goes out to shows regularly and keeps up on all the latest music. We finally met over dinner at Maxwells (both of us lamenting how much the place had changed, as *Three Dog Night* and *Creedence* songs blared over the new CD jukebox to the amusement of the loud, overdressed yuppies at the bar.) A lively conversation commenced almost immediately, and we had just started discussing the vagaries of trying to earn a living in the music business when I remembered to switch on my tape recorder...

Chris: There's nothing worse than turning something you love into a job. That's sort of what *The Devil Glitch* was supposed to be an anodyne against. Because nobody in his right mind would do a project like this. But it was so much fun, and it just unfolded so great. And every time I thought "I can't possibly get past this," whatever it was - I can't these people to cooperate, or maybe the technology to assemble the thing just wasn't there - but anytime I came to one of those crossroads, something great happened. And that's why it exists. And I thought, boy, if I had been on a label, they would have laughed me out of the office when I proposed this thing. It never would have gotten off the ground. But when something demands to see the light of day, I guess that's a pretty massive force.

Q: I bet this is something you wouldn't have been able to do when you were 20.

Chris: Probably not. I mean, I did a lot of silly stuff when I was 20. But 20 was college, and college was Kent State, and Kent was



politics and the blues. It would've been all Slim Harpo and Muddy Waters and Howling Wolf. And three minutes long max. Although the artsy-fartsy's definitely dominated my little shitty school.

Q: I should say. You wound up going from a blues band to Tin Huey. That was pretty artsy fartsy. Especially for 1979.

Chris: You have to put it in context, and the context is Kent, Ohio. They had a strip there of eight or nine bars, and there were no cover bands. They had cover bands at other bars in town, but on this one strip, there'd be thousands and thousands of college kids coming every weekend - it was the party town in Northeast Ohio - and those kids expected to hear original music. Now, I have to define that. There'd be a country rock band, and they'd do a couple of Dead songs, but they'd be writers and do their own stuff. Or there was this great blues band called 15-60-75 and they'd do this sort of improvisational jazz thing with the blues. And on and on. And there was this whole strip where you could go from one bar to another and hear original bands. Plus there was a really good art department, of which Mark Mothersbaugh and some other members of Devo were a product. And a great English department. So, shoot, it was great.

But if you were asking if I could have done something like *Devil Glitch* at 20 and the answer is probably no. I probably wouldn't have had the patience. And I would have been too tied up with ambition at that age too.

Q: That's what I was getting at. You were still at the stage where you were looking to make a name for yourself and find immediate gratification.

Chris: Well, I have to pull punk rank on ya. Not in my case, and not in the case of most of the people in Kent, because we all loathed those cover bands. You had to do something original in order to get peer approval in our set. You had to be creative to get peer approval.

Maybe the same forces were at work, but it was in such a bent context that you had to come up with something crazy...

Q: Well, I've heard Tin Huey. Obviously you guys didn't start that band to make a lot of money.

Chris: But then again, I have to tell you... Just to show you the depths of our delusion, we knew we were on Warner Brothers, that there was a requirement to sell a lot of records, and we actually thought in our naiveté that we were going to sell records. We thought the world was ready. Because all the stuff that we loved was on a major label. It was only later that we learned that they had sold, like, five copies. So in our spent, skewed way, we did try to think economically, we just got everything wrong. We were just totally deluded.

Q: Putting it in context again, though, look at what was becoming hits in those days - Talking Heads, Devo... Blondie had hit singles. So it was almost like anything could be popular.

Chris: Exactly. We thought, ooh, there's a way in here. It wasn't such a reach. We thought it was theoretically possible that we could be on American Bandstand. If PiL could be on American Bandstand, why not Tin Huey?

Q: Was the Waitresses something that was conceived to be accessible and commercial? Because it was certainly a lot more pop than Tin Huey.

Chris: Nooooo. This is where my anal compulsiveness comes in. Tin Huey was real loose. They were like all over the place. I really thought that Warners looked at us like errant children. And I just thought, it had no focus. Everybody was so creative that things happened by everybody just throwing in their bits. And I thought, maybe I should do something that was very focused and directed. My real mentors in that area were Devo. They didn't put a note down until they had the concept. And they wouldn't even make a record until they had the marketing campaign all mapped out, and the shtick. And I knew I wasn't that graphically savvy, but I knew this was a good thing, the world seemed to respect having a complete riff going. So I figured that I'd better try something like that before I had to work on an assembly line.

Q: But were those songs designed to be commercial?

Chris: Hardly. 'I Know What Boys Like' was done as a joke. And I kept backpedaling off that song for the entire career. I kept trying to say, 'listen to this riff, isn't it great?' or 'listen to this great saxophone solo' or 'isn't this a wonderfully well-turned phrase? Look at what else we can do in this band.' I was always trying to distance myself from our hit, while realizing that I'd better accept the fact that I'd better come up with another one... which I frankly wasn't able to do.

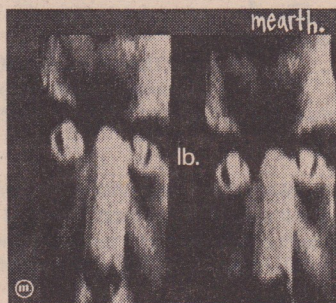
See, I had this role, I had to be the guy who was sober all the time and be the organizer. So I didn't have a whole lot of fun in the Waitresses. There's a tremendous amount of pressure when you're on a major label. And it's not even over. We worked with great people. Our A&R guy was the greatest. But if they give you a break, and if the company's only half behind you, and if they didn't really expect you to do great things, you can either go around thinking you're a star or you can begin to try and turn those people around

'A record company is a big dumb thing. Well-meaning at times, but a big dumb thing. And if you don't come up with ideas to feed this big dumb thing, it will come up with ideas that will embarrass you.'

and work your ass off. And being from the midwest and having those cornball values, I tried to do that. And... I was just thinking the other day, I should have had more fun. Because it was a lot of work.

A record company is a big dumb thing. Well-meaning sometimes, but a big dumb thing. And if you don't have the ideas to feed this dumb thing, it will come up with something. These people are making 200, 300 thousand dollars a year, and some of them are there because they're actually supposed to be creative. And they will come up with a marketing campaign that will embarrass you. So you really have to have a plan. So I had to become like Devo, I had to think down the line.

You see a lot of bands sign to a label and they think they have it made. All anybody's done is given you a job. And you've got to do your job. And your job is to write great songs, tour until you're dead, and hope that the guy who hates you in National Sales will give you \$10,000 for your advertising budget. And nowadays, it's even more complicated, because not only do you have to have all this other stuff down, but you have to get a visual thing going, because the whole industry is so video driven. I really feel for bands these days, it is so hard. I don't even have cable, that's how primitive I am, but as far as



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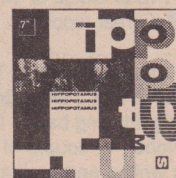
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I can tell, MTV isn't even showing videos anymore. And radio is closed. So how the hell are you going to break a band? Press? Seriously, what else is there except to tour? It's got to be 20 times harder to break a band. Because also, nobody gives a shit about music! The Internet is the new rock and roll. So I don't envy anybody trying to break into music today. Do you still see bands today who sign a deal and think they've been anointed?

Q: It really depends on the band, and how long they've been around and how much they know about what they're getting into. But from what I can see, mostly what happens is the majors go out and sign way too many bands without thinking of what they're going to do with them, and throw them up against the wall and see if one or two stick.

Chris: And it's so funny because that's exactly the way it used to be. And every music meeting you'd go to, there'd be all this hand-wringing and guilt about doing that and everybody would vow that they weren't going to do it like that anymore, and all you'd hear is 'artist development, artist development.'

Q: 'Artist Development' is the biggest myth in the world.

Chris: It is, it's the biggest myth in the world. It's too much work, I guess. Or it's easier to just sign all these hopefuls and hope that one out of ten may stick. But that's terrible. It's cruel. It's diametrically opposed to everything you believe in if you love music and you love making records.

Q: Anyway, let's go back to you. What happened after the Waitresses?

Chris: Well, let's see. I kept writing songs, because that's just what I did. I always hoped there would be some kind of reconciliation, so I kept working on another Waitresses record. Some of the songs from that are on this new record that I'll be putting out. It will be really easy to tell which ones, I think. I started doing some production. I produced a record for the dB's called *Like This*. That was really hard, because they had just lost Chris Stamey. I don't want to be unfair to Peter Holsapple, because Peter is both John Lennon and Paul McCartney. But in the band, there was a role differentiation, where the real quirky, experimental, cerebral stuff came from Chris, and Peter was more visceral. So after Chris left, they were a rhythm section with great tunes but no lead parts. So that was really hard, putting that record together.

Q: That was a great record, though. And if you read, like, the Trouser Press Guide or Christgau's book, you get a lot of credit for making it a great record.

Chris: I appreciate that. That was real nice. And basically I kept doing a lot of that. I did a Boston group called Scruffy The Cat. They were a big drinking band. I did a couple of things for Glenn Morrow at Bar None. A couple of mixes for them. I went back and forth between writing and producing. Because I was interested in a lot of technical stuff, so I wrote for audio visual magazines and computer magazines. Then I'd say screw that and get a production job, then I'd go back to writing. Then I bought a drum set, because I've always

loved playing drums. Meanwhile, I got to produce Freedy Johnston's first record, which was a wonderful experience, and became friends with Joan Osborne and did her EP. And I co-wrote a song on her new thing. And a lot of other fun stuff. So it's nice to know that stuff you did helped get people signed or noticed, or gave them a leg up.

Q: Have you been doing much producing lately?

Chris: Not a lot. It's gotten tough. You know, I'm from this nutty old school where I'd stick the amp under ten gallons of Vaseline to get some kind of weird sound. And today, most people think a tam-bourine is an exotic overdub. So I found it really frustrating. Because you bust your ass and you find yourself caught in a terrible position, you're caught between a band and a record company. And you also want to satisfy yourself. So I started little by little getting out of that. And I just kept writing songs, and getting over my own stage fright about whether anybody would want to hear what I was doing, or whether I was over the hill with what was going on, and eventually it started paying off.

Q: Was there a point consciously where you made peace with the fact that you weren't going to be a rock star?

Chris: I never wanted to be a rock star. I wanted to be a writer. I wanted to be accepted as an artist with a capital A. All the rock people I met when we were in the business were loathsome creatures. They were vapid and indolent. I didn't want to be that. I wanted to be a professional wiseass. My heroes were David Byrne and Randy Newman and all these smarty-pants. My goal was to be a successful Bohemian, which is a big difference. Although it's still expensive. A successful Bohemian has to have a lot of dough.

Q: There's a mindset in the business that once you have

a hit record, all that matters is having another hit record. But I guess you didn't feel like that.

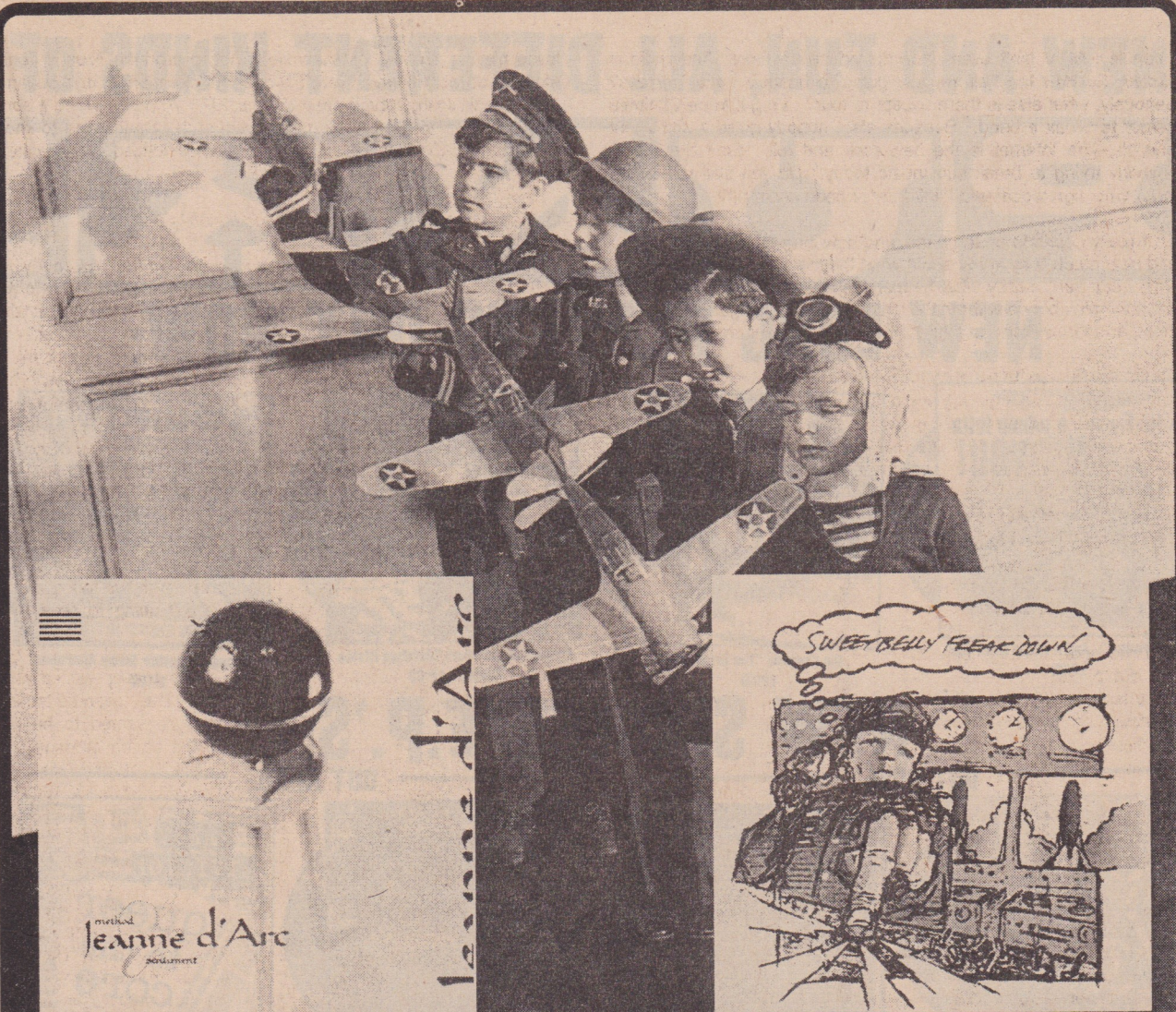
Chris: One part of me knew that I had to keep this game going, but the other part of me said that it was a fluke to begin with, and I don't know what the fuck I did the first time, and another part of me said, well, I just want to be an artist, *maan*. But actually, none of those options worked out.

After the fact, looking back, I think I've been able to accomplish what I wanted to do. In my heart, you're damn right, I'd love to have a gold record. Damn right. And I'd love that record to be the smartest, cleverest thing I've ever come up with. I don't think they're mutually exclusive. But I probably won't ever get either.

But it's all right. I'm amazed at how few records you have to sell just to have a living and keep the buzz going. The pressure to sell only comes when you're on a major label and suddenly you're responsible for all their expensive overhead. I get all the same perks doing it myself. Everytime I go to a club or buy a record, it's basically free because I can write it off. You're whole life's a writeoff when you're a self-employed, marvelously successful Bohemian.



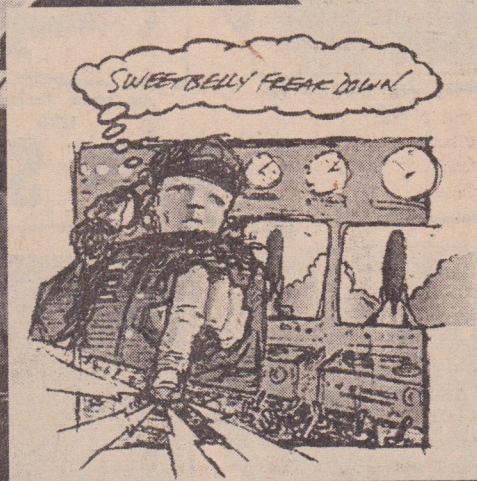
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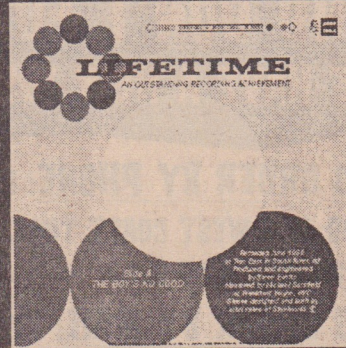
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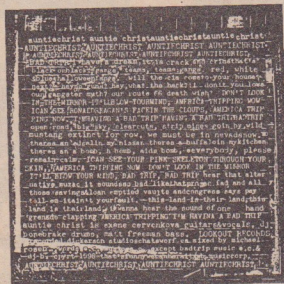
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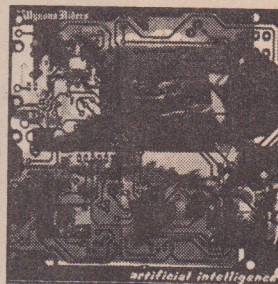
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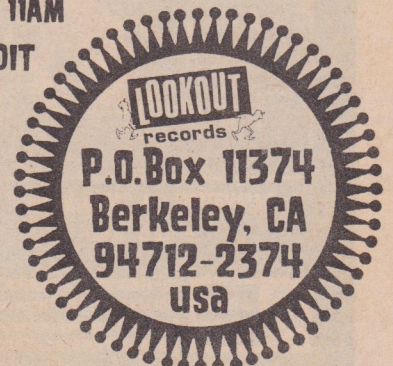


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No Sleep Till Brisbane

Tommie Griggz goes down under... and comes back up to tell the tale

Last issue we brought you a summer tour diary by South Jersey's DIY wunderbrats, tommie griggz. When Tim, TG's lead singer/guitarist, told me the band was going all the way to Australia to tour with some friends over there, I told him to bring along his pad and pencil and do another tour diary. So here it is... The Great Australian Outback Donkey Tour, hosted by our friend, Tim...

'G'day ladies and gentlemen it is w/ great pleasure (depending on where you are seated) for me to bring to you yet another seedy tour diary from a long-winded sorry excuse of a band...tommie griggz. Having spent my entire savings on the flight, I have ventured off to another land to the great unknown to treat you, the intoxicated reader, to a rare episode of a band's lust for music, smelly bars, and fast... well... fast food ... perhaps the American Dream? So gather round the fire, children of the "muso," and let me tell you the tale of torture, teasing and temperaments. Ladies and Gentlemen, I bring you, #1 in his mind but nowhere else... tommie griggz

Ok, in short here is what is about to happen ... I have been planning this tour to Australia for about 6 months with Mike from No Reason ... My band was supposed to go but they cheesed on raising the \$ and backed out at the last minute, so having been prepared for just this, we had already planned for Mike (bass) and Adam (drums) to learn a ton of tommie material which they did - and might I add, even a bit better ... eh ... a LOT better ha ha !!! So Mike set up the tour, supplied all the equipment that I needed (less the guitar) and I'm off by myself to tour AUSTRALIA for 3 weeks, and thus my tale begins...

DEPARTURE

Well... very quickly I didn't know I needed a visa so just as I was to board the plane on Friday, the airline said NOPE! ... go get one, so luckily (or it would have been 4 weeks and a tour ruined) our capital was 3 hours away... My wife and I drove Sunday to DC and waited till Monday to get our visa (which only took a minute and a half) then drove back to the airport and got a flight out by 6 pm and I was even still wearing the same freaking clothes! I am a nervous wreck ... and I've already missed 2 days of rehearsal that we were to do with the Aussies (Mike of No Reason who helped me do the whole tour, and Adam from the Fools) But I'm on the plane and outta here...

FLIGHT 863

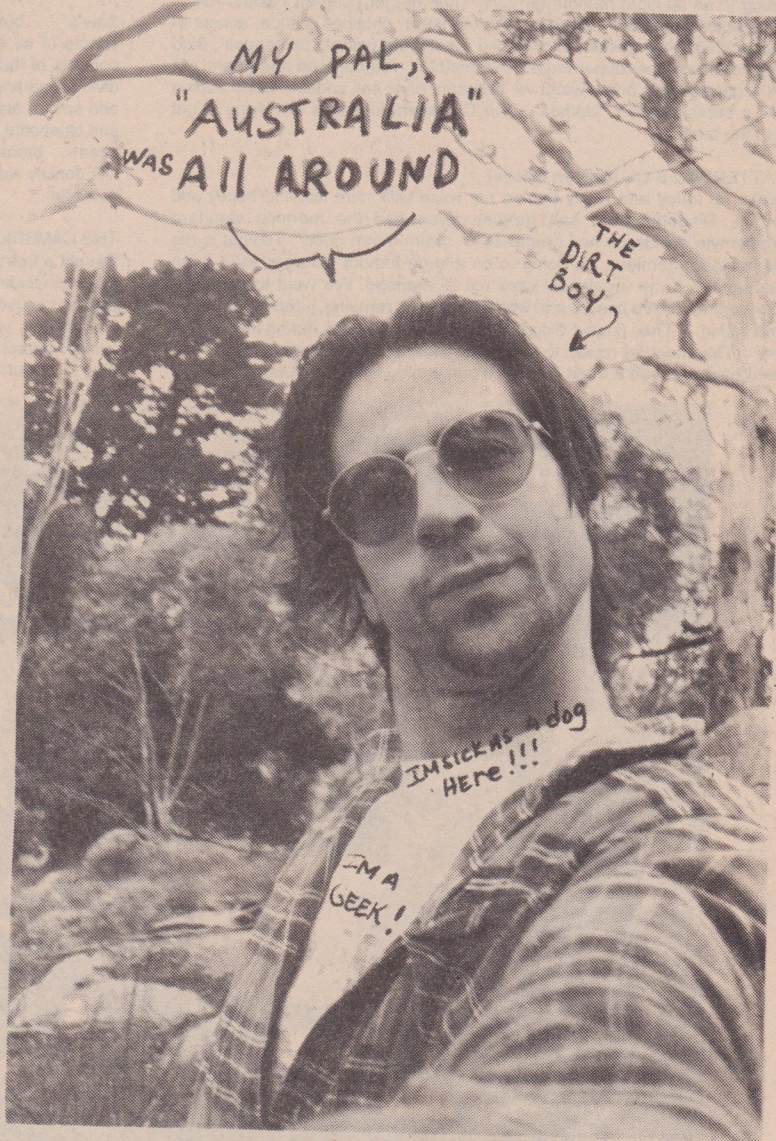
I managed to sell 2 CDs to my plane partners for the pure reason that they were only \$10, while in Australia, CDs go for \$24, so there goes 2 ... noisy plane why do I always get the window seat near the engine so I can be the first to see the engine bum, wing fall off, or pilot commit suicide or bail w/ his parachute? When we all finally met for the first time, it could have been a nightmare. I was just delirious from the 15 hour and 6 hour flights and they could have hated me ... but nah, we clicked (thank god) ... we drove 2 hours from Sydney to New Castle (our home base) and Mike set me up with a nice room and bed at his house...on the way to the studio to rehearse we saw some really tough looking girl with tattoos and a mean face riding a bike all frantic ... my first impression of aussie girls - eek! Met Adam at the studio... which had an outhouse. We rehearsed for 5 hours straight till we were nuts and jet lagged and retarded sweaty and oxygen free ... Gas is called petrol (at the servo) and is sold by the liter like 79 cents to our pint (or is it quart?) The driver's side is on the right and the road is reversed too... I was saved from certain death more than once because of looking the wrong way, plus it took me 3x as long to cross streets, I was confused for some time ... most of the tour.

Some of the quick talkers and the aboriginals (abbos) were hard to understand ... with all the slang...'fair dincum' (for real? in truth?)... had a grog instead of beee-ah (beer)... 'gettin' pissed instead of drunk had 'take away' not take out of 'fish and chips'....did I mention it was their summer and incredibly warm ... the sun bakes you quick... 'no worries' as they would say.

Righteo ... I have been afraid to drink the water but everyone assures me that they are not a 'damn 3rd world country'... and probably think I'm an idiot my mom has made me paranoid.

THE FEEDBACK (Sydney)

After a 2 hour drive and 3 flights of stairs (it seemed like 20 flights) I coulda cared less cause here I am in Australia about to play at my first show !!!



I missed the first band cause I was guarding equipment (in a drizzle) while everyone parked. The next thing I know we were on and we went crazy and jumped about like nervous headless chickens ... it was a great show, we were so geared up to play ... I drank a pitcher of water w/o thinking so if I get dysentery I will surely find out ... there weren't a lot of people (that's no surprise in this career) but we played to 100's in our heads and I even signed some girls arm ... silly really. ... we have no CDs to sell cause the distributor was a slacker and hasn't mailed them to us, or has waited till the last minute and/or sent them via donkey through the outback. I'm sure Mike was as disappointed as me about the CD's but we kept our humor about it and just sold all his friends' CDs out from under them until my records (frizbees) come... stayed at a friend's in Sydney after the show ... stayed up all night playing video games (wupped Mike's butt the whole night, I'm sure he'll say otherwise, but what does he know) and caused trouble aussie style ... reckless really ... till 8 am or so the body and comatosed eyelids told me ... bla did I tell you they have a wall of steel that you piss on instead of separate urinals, also the water flows the opposite way cause were on the other side of the world.

SOUND CENTRAL STUDIO (New Castle)

We loaded in for a 'going out of business' party with a bunch of muso's (as they say) and friends of the bands and studio. Before we went on I lost my voice and couldn't do the 4 songs we did. So we stopped and let the other bands play ... later we went back on and did our whole set but with Mike singing all the tunes ... he knew all the words (I don't even know them) so I just did talking backups, a real low key gig but still a lot of fun. We ended up going to an all night hamburger joint. Their burger ('bug-ah') was a roll w/ pineapple slice, beet root slice (a must item), chopped lettuce, accent of bacon slab, plus chicken or chopped meat glob, onions, bbq sauce, fried egg, tomato, super duper large ... Incredible!! Ate our food and when I got back gargled and drank water w/ 'Disperin' (they sell codeine laced aspirin w/o a prescription) ... Update ... our CD laden donkey is still trying to get thru the bush...

TATTERSALLS CLUB (New Castle)

Woke up today and really babied my voice with mint tea and honey and lemon, Disperine and salt gargles...even had the morning standard 'Vegiemyte' sandwich and crumpets" mmm mmm good! Tonight is the skate video premiere, it's going to be a large turnout (all ages too.) I am real unsure if my vocals will work but I'll manage. We went to the skate tournament (by the beach) and watched skaters ramping, jumping, scraping and failing ... They played Griggz and No Reason songs during the contest too. (They needed music to chase the kids out when it was over.) Then went back and had a meal of Mike's garlic /onion death ... It was real good

but sweat out of you the second you ate it ... whew, we all stunk bad, I like Mike, his girlfriend Rebecca and Adam, they are real funny and we laughed a whole lot did I tell you how No Reason is a local hero ... opening for Fugazi, Jon Spencer, silverchair (they live right here in New Castle,) Beck, and countless others. So at the 'Tat (another 3 flights of stairs) the club was crowded and bands were playing but they had 2 bands playing at once which was stupid ... everything was runnin' late. We were to play right after the video ended, which we did ... but 80 percent of the kids had left cause of the damn sound setup delay so I was a little bummed out (bum is their word for rear end, by the way) but the show was still good and my voice was healed. The stage was real large and the sound decent, we even thru in a Big Black cover of 'Crack-up' that we played way too fast. I broke strings on my guitar left and right, dropped Mike's guitar a lot cause the strap kept falling off. We joked about the munchkin speed version of "Crack-up" for the entire tour. I am pretty sure I picked up a hernia 2 weeks before the tour, so the lump in my gut really aches to sing, talk, or laugh, especially when I eat and then load equipment after the show we browsed all the after-hours 24 hour bars (which are very common) and neglected sleep till 8 am (again)... Is it possible the CD donkey stopped at a water hole to drink and drowned?

GENERAL NOTES:

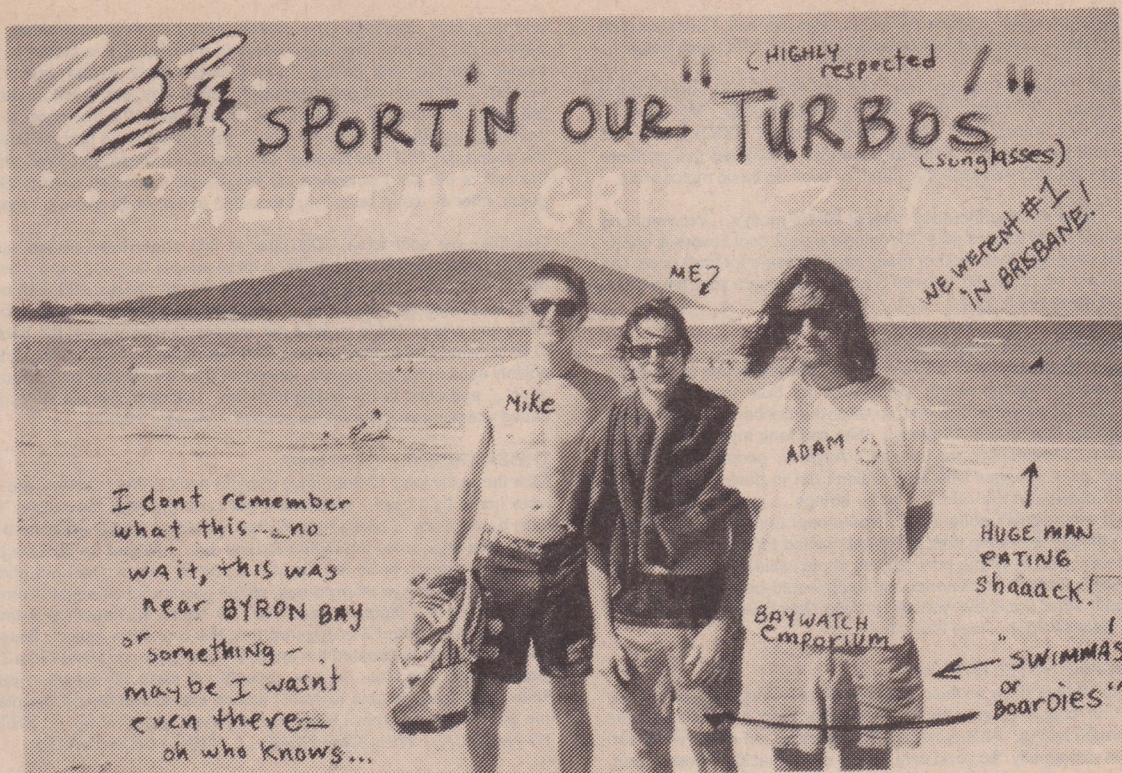
Mike has done a great job on the promo for the tour cause a bunch of people who heard my accent told me who I was.... 'Oh you are that Yank... tommye griggz from America who's on tour with his band..... AAAAAAAAAAAAAA! (funny ...

Saw a bunch of nice and not so nice sights, parks, and kite flying, people of all sorts and summerness... WWII forts and swim holes for convicts of the early days... had a wonderful dinner with Mike's family ... divine food and delightful company... swam in a friends pool (which they add salt to) also went swimming at the beaches, famous for waves, sharks and bluebottle jellyfish. Adam and Mike rode the largest waves we had ever seen... breakin about knee high WOW... we are about to file a missing CD donkey report ... did a radio interview on the Wide Awake Show that was neat.

THE CAMBRIDGE CLUB (New Castle)

Caught a free Annie Liebowitz Exhibit with a ton of her famous photos face to face including that yoko and nude lennon one too ... Inspirational. We're psyched cause we have tix to see 'Quasar' or better known as The Beastie Boys at this very same club tomorrow ... They used a disguise name to avoid contract problems to practice their other material.... but tonight we play to about 30 people, had lots of fun at each other's expense, actin'





stupid ... Spike thumping w/ his cheat sheets (which we teased him about the entire tour) and Adam slammin' his bum off clueless, and me the guitar hillbilly obnoxiously hopeless ... the way the 3 of us blended was pure lucky magic because you would have never known we'd only just learned all this stuff in 5 hours...we just clicked Oh yea, after we played I asked the booking agent at the Cambridge if we could open for the Beastie Boys tomorrow ... HE SAID YES!!!!

..... the CD donkey was last seen having a slight shock of sun overdose in the heart of the desert, our search is being stepped up to a full blown rescue mission will we ever find him?

THE ROCK SHOP (New Castle)

This was a CD - T-shirt - skate - surf store and full of kids at all times. We loaded in early so we could be on by 7 pm, other bands were playing already. On the 2nd floor, the shop had a riser for drums and the PA we had to rent (they say 'hire'). The shop donated about 100 tommye griggz shirts, plus Mike had made up 2 dozen shirts of another design (we got rid of all our shirts on this tour.) We went on and had a cool time. The whole 2nd floor was filled w/ kids. I was real glad when NO REASON played. I finally got to see them and they were great and then some!!! Mike was sssssssick!!! I can't wait to bring them to the States for their tour in April '98 with tommye griggz oh yea did I mention that Adam has been pretty well seedily hungover almost every morning since I've met him beeee-ah (beer).

THE CAMBRIDGE (New Castle)

We rushed to the printers to make flyers to hand out at the Beastie show ... cause we were to go on after them and we wanted people to stay for us ... we made the copies and did all our other pre-show crap and then went to watch the Beasties.. the show was so packed that it was hard to park but we found spots. Went in and enjoyed the Beasties... 800 plus rowdy people ... when BB were done we handed out the 450 lil flyers, set up our gear, then waited awhile trying to get the sound guy to get his shit together which cost us about 600 people... Oh well the show was still the best we ever played, we ripped it up, sweating, droolin', I had my guitar on my back crawling on the ground, broke more strings, all a blur really. But the crowd response was fairly positive. Even had little skeleton girls dancing their anemic, anorexic sex dances, quite attractive, let me go spew... Met real nice people and sold shirts, this was a highlight of the tour for all of us.

Last that I heard, the CD donkey was picked up dehydrated to the bone and blind as a watermelon and needed to be taken to the hospital to be re-juiced ... the donkey should get discharged tomorrow...

THE CIVIC YOUTH CAFÉ (Canberra) (c/o Intent Records)
HOORAY OUR CD DONKEY HAS ARRIVED AND WE NOW HAVE CD-S

others (though we should have) ... cause we took a wrong turn and just kept driving and then drove some more... (Australia has speed cameras that take pictures of your license plate when you speed or run thru red lights)... anyhow we got extremely lost. Finally, 7 hours later, we got on the right path and rode into town not knowing where we were to go yet, turned into a servo to get directions and wouldn't you know that the youth center was right across the street... You could even hear the music. We couldn't have planned it better ... We pulled up in time to load in and go on ... all the others had written us off as history so they didn't even expect us ... I am real glad we made it .. It was an all ages show and about 30 kids were there. During our set, though no one left no one really showed emotions on their faces ... weird really... Mike lost his power chord so he had to borrow this mutant fart bass amp from another band... that made us all laugh. Our amps were loud as heck for the tiny room but the show went well and we had a bunch of fun at our car's expense. We sold bunches of records and shirts, met lots of cool kids. Our 'kiwi' friend (a new Zealander) offered his house to stay in, so that's where we stayed that night. Traveled an hour on main roads and then 30 minutes into the bush at 10 miles an hour on creepy dark dirt roads ... herds of sheep and rabbits jumped in front of the cars, extremely secluded. He was a real nice host. Later on a bunch of drugs got passed around and I think I accidentally breathed them in my lungs, cause I had munchies and went to bed w/ the worst congestion I have ever had in years... Had to sleep sitting straight up (what little sleep I got) trying to breathe or feeling like I was dying ... If I had smoked the damn stuff directly I'd probably would've felt better ... it really sucked being sick that night ... I did clear up by 10 am or so, and the scenery in the daylight was one of the most incredible sights I had ever seen ... a rolling hills, country version of tropical Africa ... all of Australia's scenery (that I saw) was like this. On our way out to the main road, we crashed into the back of Mike's car cause Adam was looking down. Adam's yellow wagon was dented in the front and nothing happened to Mike's car, though Mike can't show this section to his mom cause she was never told... ha ha ... better hide this, Mike. We pulled out Adams 'bumpa' and bent out his fan and continued on.

on a general note:

a girl pulled a false gun on me and shot it at my head. I thought it was real. She (freaking an American) laughed her butt off... I shoulda wacked her skull in American style.. On another night I got escorted out of a bar and into the rain for being a bit out of hand (sleeping) ... got lost, got soaked, couldn't get a cab, slept in some alcove of some building till the sun came up. Of course there are those who will tell you I slept in a tree...truly evil evening...

The label Chin Chen is picking up a 4 tommye griggz 'aussie style' songs for a 7 inch so we have scheduled recording time and are going to record 8

songs b-4 the trip is over. Since my hernia hurt like hell, I decided (and succeeded) to starve myself for two days straight... but I felt much better.

Played 'cricket' (the national pastime, like our baseball.) I sucked but it was fun anyway ... Wickets, balls, bowlers, bla bla bla. We were at Rebecca's family's house, they had an aussie "bobby" (BBQ) which was very yummy and turned into a drinking bonanza. I avoided this as there were those that couldn't see straight, stand, or even do basic motor skills.

another day.... after another increddy meal at Mike's mom's... We went and recorded live the most wicked stuff, 6 originals plus 2 cool covers & one of ours that Mike sang and then 2 other really daggy (aussie for bad) ones. Did this until 3:30 am which would've been 3 pm plus 6 hours your time if you care ... I could never get it right .

THE CAMBRIDGE (again) (New Castle)

We picked up a residency here ... We went on after the house band, the... uh ... bla bla bla's.. All the bands had to wait for Soundgarden to finish cause there was no crowd at the bar, so after the concert, the bar picked up... The drinking age is only 18 here... they call tank tops 'singlets' and shorts 'boardies.' Sweatshirts are 'jumpas.' Anyhow, people stuck around at the bar and even younger kids that couldn't get in peeked through the windows from outside in the rain... I broke strings ... again... like the 8th song so I just restrung MY guitar (a 10 minute beer drinking, abuse laden, kinda pause) though everyone was polite and waited for our return. Which we did and I was messin w/ the pool players shots while we played ... they liked us anyway, ..hmm?... In America my teeth would be missing by now, don't you think? After the show we went around New Castle for a bit and it poured for 2 days straight ... love the rain.

THE MELBOURNE HOTEL (Brisbane)

It's gonna be a 12 hour drive so this sucks but we're leaving early so we can sightsee up the coast, Lennox Head, Byron Bay, and the drive up was completely breath taking. All the clothes that I took w/ me either were wet, smelly, or wet and smelly. So I had very little to wear, that kinda was a drag. It was a little cramped and uncomfortable in the car, but I'm in Australia for Pete's sake! so I really coulda cared less. We drilled the trip into a 7 hour drive, stayed at a beach/ backpackers hostel, which was neat, 6 bunk beds to room... we went swimming, stayed up late and cruised to a lousy cover band bar and then swam some more. In the morning, we were off to 'the Queensland,' the rivals to New South Wales. On the drive there Mike was eyeing down all the slowpoke Q'lander drivers ... around mid-day we swam in a really wild water hole/ stream with brown H2O, eels, and a rope swing .. even got sun burned ... we were all bushed but drove on to the Melbourne. It was a lil hard to find so Adam was late... that's no surprise. I went lookin around in the city. It was a dump, what a shitpile. We got hooked up with a heroin junkie who took us to the shabbiest Chinese grease-pit take-out he could find. (I swear there was a noodle (or worm) or two under my slime-cooked slab of grease and testicles) ... There were drug dealers on their cell phones everywhere, and the hostel we rented really sucked. The city was just like a semi- tropical NY or Philly. I was not happy . In fact,

and disgusted didn't help the overall morale at this point either, but the aussies did joke that they were weaning me back to the states ... Later we loaded into the club having done a soundcheck earlier which was 'no worries'. But when we actually played, the songs, set, even our timing just fell apart. It was the worst gig we had done. We managed to pull the set/songs together. We couldn't hear shit (we came to find out later on that the sound guy had deliberately sabotaged our monitors. Well anyway, at the end of the set I smashed my long-loved nameless messy friend of a guitar, after all we've been thru I smash it at our worst show in creation.

Get this...we sold lotsa CD's plus at this show even picked up steady airplay because of it. Apparently, a lot of people dug our band... or had too much too drink! We laughed about the whole ordeal, and with our show over we picked up our rubble, played pool, got pissed (me drinkin straight Hi-C) and proceeded to make it our mission to make fun of the house band to their faces and to their fans ... The bar made last call (over 10 times & politely each time) and we left, looked all over for another club... found none open ... and went to the hostel to sleep. I skipped the bill in the morning cause wrestling w/ the roaches sucked ... weebee jeebies.

THE SAD REALITY (its all over)

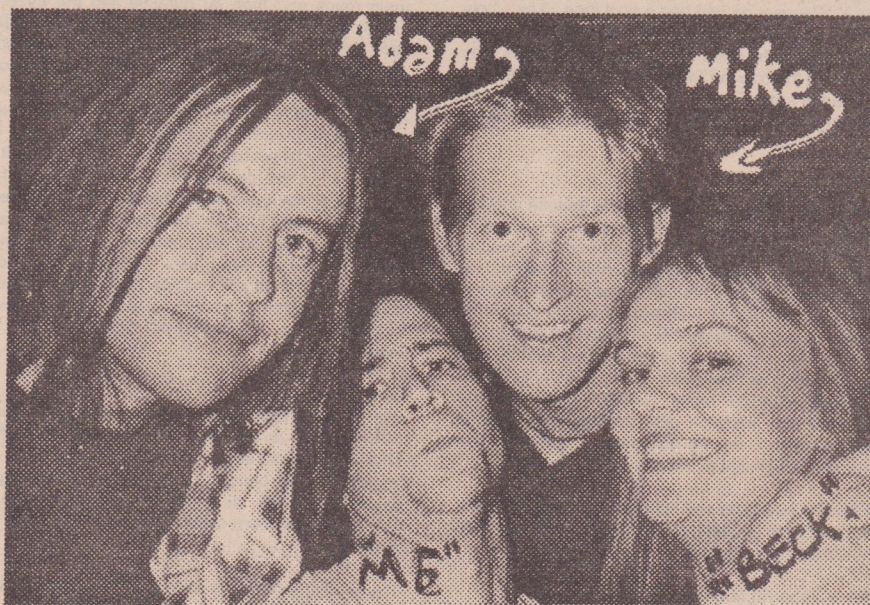
After the really long 12 hour drive straight back to New Castle, me & Adam were home by 11 pm... when Mike got back (he took the scenic "I'm lost" tour) it was 1 am ... so we helped clean at Mike's job for an hour to help us get to bed sooner for the flight the next day. I stayed up till 4am packing, was up by 7am to be at the Sydney airport by 11 am. Said our good-byes, went thru customs w/ all my drugs, stolen goods and smuggled items to sell (not), got on the flight to San Fran, 10 hours in, threw up 4 time from airsickness...sweated & staggered thru the San Fran airport, boarded the Philly flight, was nauseated the entire 5 hours plus our plane did a 2 minute (acute) nose dive. (no lie, we thought we were all dying) ... landed in Philly...practically unable to walk I waited last to wobble off the plane, out into the rankest weather I have ever smelled, tasted or felt WELCOME TO AMERICA ... WELCOME HOME YANK ... G'DAY MATE!

If it wasn't for my wife being the most beautiful sight in the world I'da pulled a post office massacre right there in the terminal gate and that was my tour to Australia, I am glad to have met Mike, Rebecca and Adam and look forward to touring there again real soon.

ON A LAST NOTE:

So everyone is aware, my label Scooterbat Records has added No Reason to our Link Up... & we're looking for other dependable links to complete the label's D.I.Y touring and distro swapping network system. If you are from Holland, Europe, Japan, the U.K or U.S.A. and would like to be a part of this group or receive information on how it works, please send a S.A.S.E and we will send you everything that you need ... and if not interested, stay home, play out, go to sleep, do nothing, or do whatever it is that you do ... peace and music...

write: Tommie Griggz, Box 6, Collingswood NJ 08108 USA





YOU AND WHAT ARMY?

You & What Army found me the old-fashioned way. The band's debut album came in the mail and brightened my life for the week it stayed in my CD player. That happens from time to time - it's one of the reasons why Jersey Beat is celebrating its 15th anniversary - but this time, the story comes with a twist. Because one of the members of YAWA is not only a long-time acquaintance, but a major label publicist who has been calling me to talk about bands for years.

That would be Ken Weinstein, YAWA's bassist and the guy who does publicity for bands like Bad Religion and the Lemon-heads at Atlantic Records. While I had to commend him on his integrity - it's not easy to separate your private from your professional life, especially in a business that runs on cronyism and pull - I also wanted to slap him around a few times. If he had just mentioned that he was in this cool little band I might want to check out, I would have known about You & What Army even sooner.

Why do I love this band? They're a little bit punk, a little bit country, with lyrics that crawl under your skin and manage to capture *just the way you were feeling* when one of those moments happened in your life.

As it turned out, it took me a while to finally catch up with these guys - like any good NYC band, they don't play out too often, preferring to cash in on the few quality gigs that come their way rather than play once a week at dives like the Spiral and Pyramid. But when I finally cornered them - in the basement lounge at Brownie's, actually - we immediately got down to business.

You & What Army is Gary Meister on guitar and vocals, Ken Weinstein on bass, Chad Royce on drums, and Andrea Pierotti on violin. Present were Gary and Ken; Chad and Andrea were AWOL. - Jim Testa

Q: You two guys seem like you've known each other forever.

Ken: We have, literally. Gary and I have known each other since our teen years. And we've known Chad since the crib. Chad's dad is good friends with Gary's dad, and that's how we found out about Chad when we needed a drummer.

Gary: It's a decidedly unrock type of connection.

Q: People don't believe that I didn't know Ken was in this band until after I heard the CD. Is this your first band?

Ken: No, I've been in bands before. This is my first real band. Well, I was in one band before that played gigs, this band called Raja Rock. Other than that I was just in jammy things. But I have always been in bands, at least for the last ten years. (to Gary) You've always been in bands.

Gary: Yeah, I've *always* been in bands.

Ken: His high school band was The Foreheads. That was a good name.

Gary: We played Clash songs. We were like a high school punk-rock cover band. But it was fun.

Q: There seems to be quite a few really good poppy bands in New York right now - you, Shake Appeal, Cardinal Woolsey, Jenifer Convertible - although it's probably too soon to call it a scene or a movement yet. Do you think that's a logical next step after years of all that slow, depressing grungy stuff?

Gary: Probably. It's hard to say.

Ken: I think so. There was enough anti-rock for the last 5 years that people all of a sudden got into the rock statement again. That's why Kiss could tour with their makeup again. And one

thing about the kinds of bands you mentioned, they're all bands that go on stage and shake it. That didn't happen for a long time. It wasn't cool to shake it.

Gary: Yeah, and melody really wasn't really in either.

Ken: So I think it's a logical progression, because you always get sick of what was before, and I think people have definitely gotten sick of the alterna-trendy thing. You know, using the mike stand as a psychiatrist's couch.

Gary: Although we do a little bit of that too.

Q: I don't know. Your stuff seems pretty happy to me.

Gary: It's funny, because some of the press we got said it was too gloomy. And then other people said it was so upbeat, it's sick.

Ken: This one magazine said we needed to get our asses kicked, we're too happy. But that's not true. I've had my ass kicked.

Q: I had that reaction the first time I listened to the CD, that it was really happy. But after a few listens, there are definitely other emotions going on.

Ken: I think Gary has a really sick mind, actually. Because if you sit down and listen to the lyrics, he sees things a little differently than the rest of us. It's definitely not all 'happy happy joy joy.'

Gary: Especially now. Because the newer songs seem like they're more sad. It's not really intentional, but we're at the point now where we get to the seventh song in the set and I'm like, "oh my god, another heavy song. I really don't want to sing this right now." So I think that at a certain point, the songs were all more upbeat, but now, that's definitely not true.

Ken: I wouldn't like it if the songs were all upbeat. It's never been my favorite thing.

Q: Is New York getting any better for bands? It seems to me like maybe it is, but I'm not down in the trenches like you guys.

Ken: You mean to be a band? No, it's impossible.

Gary: It's really a bad place to be a band. It's a really good place to live, and it's a good place to live off the energy. You can get inspired by all the culture. But it's hard to find a place to rehearse. Getting known. Even if you play around a lot, it's hard to get known. And there's a lot of industry here, so you're always trying to attract their attention, but their attitude is that they'd rather get in a plane and go see a band in Kansas City or Seattle or someplace, because if they don't see you this week, they know they can see you next week.

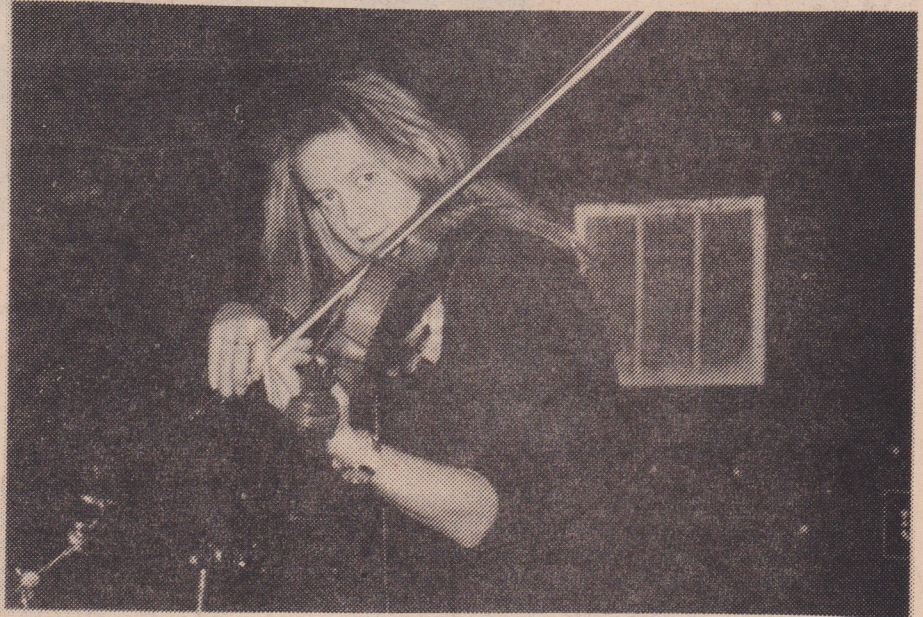
Ken: When you think about it, every night, we're up against *Victor Victoria*. We're up against *Showboat*. Or some big

band at Irving Plaza. No matter what night you play, there's always a dozen other amazing things going on.

Gary: Yeah, but we can guarantee more bang for your buck than... well, at least *Sunset Boulevard*.

Ken: (laughs) Yeah, definitely *Sunset Boulevard*. But it's a very frustrating city to live in. It's hard to get respect. But you do it because you have a good time and it's fun.

Q: It certainly doesn't help that there's no local press or radio supporting local bands here.



Ken: There's that too. Like in Boston, there's FNX, which plays local bands. The only stations that play local bands around here have about 50 watts. Nobody can hear them. It's interesting, in a way. I think we're living at a time when the guitar has seen better days. I think people are tiring of the guitar. And another band with a guitar, in terms of finding a large audience... it's not gonna happen.

Gary: I don't think that's true. People always listen to that shit. I remember reading this thing in the *Village Voice* in 1990 that guitars are too. That was right before Nirvana. Then they came back. And I think what you were talking about, that sort of pop movement, is part of that.

Ken: It's funny, but one of the few good things about New York is that the press, the critics who are writing about music here, have always been very pop friendly. They love that shit. They love guitar bands. And we like that kind of music too. So the press has been very good to us. I think we have been noticed by the critics in New York because we make the kind of music that we all like. And luckily for bands like us, we have *Jersey Beat* and *Sound Views* and *Smug*.

Gary: That's where most of the attention has come from.

Ken: Yeah, but we've gotten some write-ups in the *Daily News*. *Time Out New York* has been very nice. *New York* magazine

Q: One way you guys stand out is the violinist. Was the idea of strings always part of the band?

Gary: We had a guy who played accordion on our very first gig. And over the course of time, he would bring in a violin and do half-and-half. Back then, we were such a different band. We would do like a ska song, and then an old-timey blues. Weird pop songs that an accordion would sort of fit with. But you couldn't fit accordion on most of our stuff now. And a violin works nice. It's sort of like having another guitar. A violin can sort of sound like a guitar, at least to me. And yet it gives a much different feel.

Ken: Really, the way this band has developed, it's been the You & What Army Collective. Gary just had a bunch of songs and some musician friends and we were just checking things out. That's how it started. And we had this one guy, Ken Friedman, who's on the album, that we really liked playing with, so we stuck him on a bunch of songs. There's never been any conscious decisions about which way the band would go, things have just sort of happened.

Q: Do you guys look at this at something that you just enjoy doing, or is it in your mind that you could get signed and quit your day jobs and make this your career?

Gary: I would like that personally. That's what I've been working for. We don't tour much, but we do everything else we can do to try and get a deal.

Ken: I would love for this band to be taken seriously.

Gary: We are taken seriously. Sometimes it sneaks up on us, but we are.

Ken: No, we are. But I try not to think about signing a major deal and quitting a day job. I think more about just being a great band. If we could do that, it would be amazing, of course - quit your day job and just be in a band. But I'm not obsessed with that. But then, I have a better day job than the other guys.

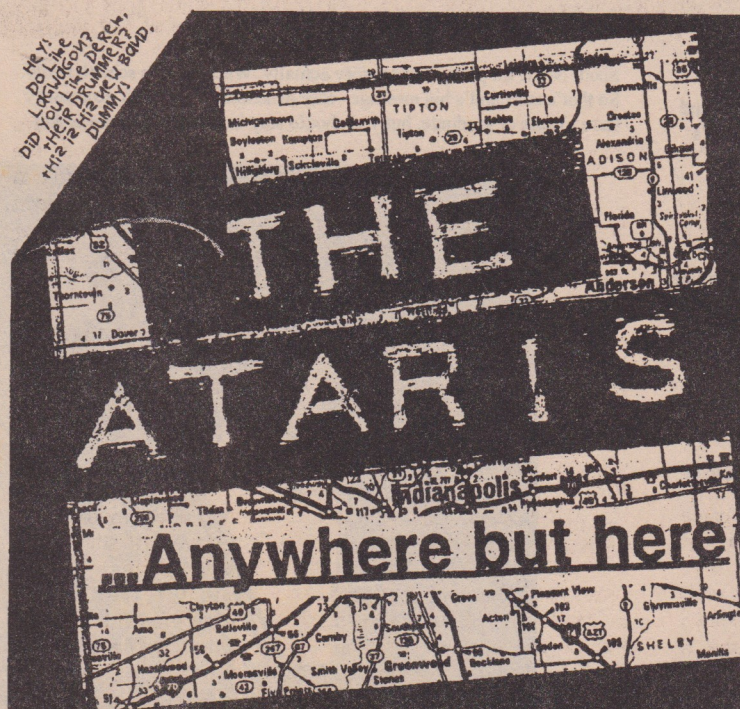
Q: Speaking of which, working at a major label, you've seen exactly what can happen when bands take that step, and it isn't always a rosy picture.

Ken: I have a very, very, very super-hyper awareness... to quote Spinal Tap, 'too fucking much perspective.'

Gary: We don't have a lot of illusions about this.

Ken: Definitely no illusions. And as soon as Gary has one, he calls me and I set him straight. Like he'll call and say, 'I have this illusion, can you shatter this? Because this one person really likes us and I think he might sign us.' And then I tell why it's not going to work... I just figure that it's going to pay off eventually. There's enough shit that there's always something to make you want to quit on a daily basis. So you just have to step back and try to remember the essentials of why you're really doing this.

Gary: It's just important to do what we want to do, and play the music we want to make. And realize that we're just doing this for ourselves, and if we're lucky enough that other people like it, then great. Like we were lucky that there were people who wanted to do this record with us. When you start trying to gear what you're doing to this or that, you're just chasing your tail.



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REEL BIG FISH

No issue of Jersey Beat - not even the big anniversary issue - would be complete without at least one new band that we fell in love with and just had to write about. After all, that's why we started this whole thing in the first place. So allow me to introduce you to Reel Big Fish, a seven-man punky ska (or ska-ful punk) band from Southern California, whose Mojo Records release Turn The Radio Off spent more time in my CD player last year than almost any other album. RBF is Aaron Barrett, chief songwriter, lead singer, and guitar; Matt Wong, bass; drummer Andrew Gonzalez; and the peppiest, tightest, and craziest horn section around - Scott Klopfenstein and Tavis Werts on trumpet, Grant Barry and Dan Regan on Trombone. (Scott also does some singing.) I got to talk to Matt and Scott downstairs in Tramps' dressing room during the band's winter tour with Goldfinger. - Jim Testa

Q: So how do 7 guys wind up in a band together?

Scott: It starts with three guys about six years ago. Aaron, Matt, and Andrew were the originals. And then it went through a lot of changes and a lot of years and a lot of hullabaloo that goes into being a band, and it's been the way it is now for almost three years.

Q: Did you envision this as a ska band with a horn section when you started?

Matt: It was a rock band first and the horns came later. We started just like any other band, playing Led Zeppelin and all that crap. It's good crap, y'know, Jimi Hendrix, old Bob Marley stuff. But just through the evolution of the band, we decided maybe horns would soon good. And we started playing more ska. So it happened.

Q: Where are you all from?

Scott: We're all from Orange County, California, which is down south of L.A.

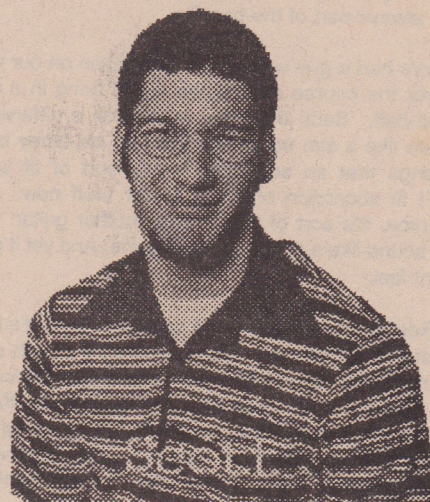
Q: Ah, Offspring country.

Scott: We prefer to think of it as No Doubtville. We're from No Doubtville.

Q: Whenever I meet bands that play a lot of ska, they usually say Operation Ivy was their first big love. Was that how you got into it?

Matt: Actually, Sublime. I liked Sublime a lot. But I'm into the reggae stuff a lot more.

But I think we all listened to The English Beat and stuff like that a lot more. Operation Ivy was a great band, and they influenced us a lot, but



after all that other stuff.

Scott: Definitely.

Q: Scott, how did you get into the band?

Scott: Actually, I was in another band with Aaron called the Ska-lars. Not the Ska-lars you've probably heard of. There are about a dozen bands called the Ska-lars all over the country. And Tavis and Dan had problems, they kept getting grounded for being in the band. So Aaron needed two more horn players to be in Reel Big Fish and he asked me if I wanted to join. So he got Grant and I, because we were both in the Ska-lars with Aaron. Aaron played trombone in the Ska-lars, actually.

Q: Nothing really too exciting, then, huh?

Scott: No, it's a pretty boring story actually. We all met in school, really. So that's our band's big message - stay in school. You don't necessarily have to pass or graduate, but you should stay in it, because if we hadn't





stayed in school, we wouldn't have met each other and started the band.

Matt: Plus there's lots of girls in school. So hey, why not?

Scott: We're talking high school, here. We weren't really into college.

Q: Yeah, you guys are all pretty young, aren't you?

Scott: Pretty much. All the horn players are 19, Aaron's 22 now, Matt is 24, and Andrew's 24.

Matt: We're not too young.

Q: Compared to what? I guess compared to your audiences you're a little older.

Matt: That, and the other guys in the band. I graduated from high school and these guys were all in junior high.

Q: So what are the dynamics of having seven people in a band like?

Matt: A pain in the ass. Less money, more stink, basically that's it.

Q: Does it geometrically increase the likelihood of arguments, since you have so many more opinions to contend with?

Scott: Actually, we argue, but we don't get in fights a lot. We get along pretty well.

Matt: It's more like hissy types of arguments than physical types of arguments. It's like, "fuck you," "no, fuck you," and then we all go out and have something to eat.

Q: How do the songs come together with the horn arrangements and everything?

Scott: Aaron mostly writes the songs. And then he'll either come us with a horn line or he'll ask us to write one, and then we'll take off on what he's got and write something. Play it a few times and see how it works, see how everything should be arranged.

Matt: It really depends on the song, too. Sometimes a song will just pop out and everybody's part will just be there. And sometimes it takes a little longer. We're lucky in that we're pretty quick in writing songs, and we're just lucky that they usually come out pretty catchy. The arrangements are

usually pretty easy for three chords. You can't go too wrong.

Q: Were you horn guys all in marching bands and stuff like that?

Scott: Oh yeah. Marching band, jazz combos. Things like that.

Q: Another reason to stay in school.

Scott: Yeah, they give you a free trumpet and free lessons.

Q: I always used to have a theory that bands with a good sense of humor had a much harder time selling records. People just don't take them seriously for some reason. Like the Ramones or the Dictators. And the thing I really like about your songs is that a lot of them are really funny. Do you think that's a plus or minus?

Matt: It's funny you should mention that because I was thinking about that the other day. I was looking at all the bands that have real comical lyrics, bands like No FX and the Vandals. Don't get me wrong, they're successful, they're huge bands. But I do think we're just a little more commercial. I mean, we're doing okay. So far it hasn't been a hindrance.

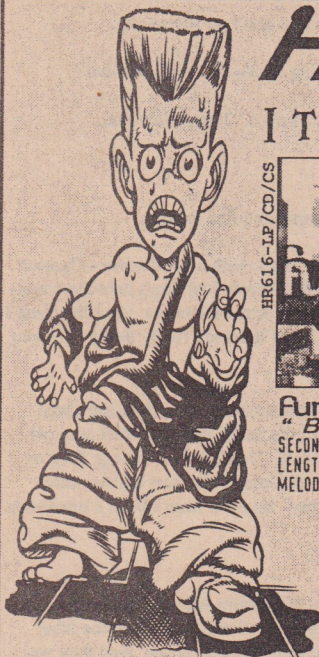
Q: How has the album been received?

Scott: It's doing really well, actually. The album was released in August but we didn't really start getting a big promotional push from the label until January. And in that time we've sold 50,000 copies. And then we have 6000 or so sold over in Japan. There was a week about a month ago when it was the 19th most sold record in America on SoundScan, and that was with getting no promotional push and just a little bit of airplay.

Q: I'm sure it's occurred to you that you couldn't have picked a better time to release your first record, what with Sublime and No Doubt making ska really popular again for the first time in years.

Matt: We've been doing this for a while, so it's not like we jumped on any bandwagon or anything. But it just so happened that we played one show in Hollywood and then - boom! - here come the bigwigs. There were labels all over the place who wanted to sign us.





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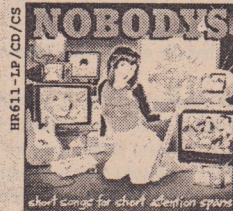
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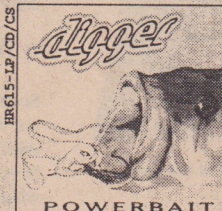
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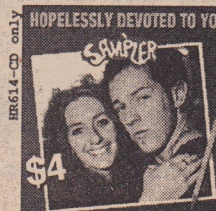
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Q: There's obviously a huge difference between the true underground ska scene, like the Moon Ska Records bands, and the MTV-friendly version of ska like No Doubt. Do you think the popularity of one will trickle down and a lot of kids will discover the more underground stuff?

Matt: It just depends. The underground stuff has always been there, probably always will be there until the end of time. The stuff that's getting on MTV is not as ska as that stuff. But some of it is getting through. Mephiskapheles was on MTV once.

Scott: Heck, we were on MTV once.

Q: I'm sure you will be again.

Scott: I hope so.

Q: Ah, the stuff is really catchy, it's really trendy right now, and you guys are all really cute. You'll be all over MTV in no time.

Scott: Oh stop. Now you're just flattering us. [like Groucho] And flattery will get you everywhere!

Q: I think there's an undeniable appeal to ska. Everytime I listen to it, I just want to smile.

Matt: Oh yeah. It makes you want to move. But there are bands that play ska that just make you angry. Voodoo Glow Skulls just make me angry because that rhythm is so fast. Most ska is just so laid back, it's nice. The Voodoo Glow Skulls rhythms are so crazy that just make me mad.

Q: There seems to be this big vacuum right now. Grunge is over, and it's like everybody's waiting for the Next Big Thing to come along. Maybe it will be ska.

Special thanks to the following nice folks for the Reel Big Fish photos:

Melt Ska Zine, 22712 Golondrina, Mission Viejo CA 92692; <http://www.blarg.net/~melt>

Shallow End Zine, c/o Marc, PO Box 234, Manhattan KS 66505; <http://www-personal.ksu.edu/~maj9544/shallowend.html>



Scott: We want to be the Nirvana of ska.

Matt: I think that's taken. I think Sublime was the Nirvana of ska.

Scott: Okay, then let's be the Pearl Jam of ska.

Matt: I don't know, I think No Doubt's the Pearl Jam of ska.

Scott: But they're not really ska. And they don't claim ska. We claim ska. We should be the Pearl Jam of ska. Okay? We're the Pearl Jam of ska. We'd like to be, anyway.



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Punk Rock Police?

Step outside yourself for a second and look at all the crazy shit going on in the punk rock "underground" scene. What's happening? All I see is a lot of kids doing the same shit, thinking the same stuff, acting the same stupid ways, and most noticeably, all looking the same. Instead of sticking together and forming bonds and friendships with open minds, we've come to grow apart. The cliques are becoming more and more segregated on "coolness" or "acceptability". Where's the open mind? Where's the idea that punk culture derived as a place for kids to turn to who were perceived different or deviant from societies norms and values?

Fuck, we need to quit relying on the media, 'cause that shit is just chewing away at our intelligence. In fact, it's mocking it. I'm surprised Aaron Spelling hasn't done a soap opera on punk/hardcore kids. There's so much to stereotype and perhaps it would make us all step back for a second and realize all the dumb shit we're involved in. I'm not saying being apart of the punk scene or independent scene (however you want to label it) is a bad thing, but you have to admit to yourself that it's so damn based on trends and acceptability. If your local scene is primarily into hardcore and you're a die hard punker, well, are you gonna just sit back and turn emo, or put on your own diy punk show? Ya gotta take that first step because the true kids will respect you in the long run. I'm really tired of people dissing on kids in the scene who listen to bands on major labels or hang out with people who dress in clothes made from hemp. Shit, if you're embarrassed about your not so punk rock friends, then you're a fucking idiot and need to reevaluate your own self confidence.

Another thing that's going on these days that everyone should be taking complete advantage of is the Internet. Right now, there are absolutely no restrictions. President Clinton is trying to pass a bill that will have the government decide what is decent and what is considered indecent for Americans to view on the internet. This means, if the Republican Congress deems your website, filled with information on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, indecent, then your page will be taken off the Internet and you will be prosecuted by local officials. It's screwed up. It's another way for our lovely US government to keep it's citizens under their complete control. They're trying to tell us what is indecent. NO THANKS. I think I can figure out for myself by now. And I think parents are a better judge of what their children should be allowed and not allowed to see on the Internet than a group of right wing conservatives.

So, if you have access to the internet, use it. Share all the information you have and help spread positive social messages which might even be beneficial in saving lives. The only good activist is an active one.

Ok, if you live in New Jersey or plan on driving through the Garden State, here's some helpful punk rock tips.

Record Stores

1. Let It Rock - Montclair, NJ - This is a total independent music store devoted to punk/hardcore/emo/ska including lots of vinyl, CD's, posters, stickers, zines, and tee shirts. Bob, the guy who owns the joint is one super cool person, so go support his great establishment!
2. Sound Station - Westfield, NJ - It's the only cool record shop I know that hasn't been chased away when a Sam Goody opens up down the street. No, Sound Station is still kicking strong. The owner and his brother are only in their mid 20's and this is their life. MUSIC. They've got a nice selection of zines, tapes, records, tee-shirts, show listings, CD's, and even some cool videos.

3. CD Express - Madison, Denville, Milburn, NJ - Up to three stores now, so they must be doing something right. CD Express is primarily CD's but starting to build on the vinyl collection as well last I checked. I prefer the Madison store when my pal Glen (glasses) is working. He's a rad punker who loves the Ramones and plays in the band Squiggy. They carry both major label and independent stuff as well as a huge used CD section.

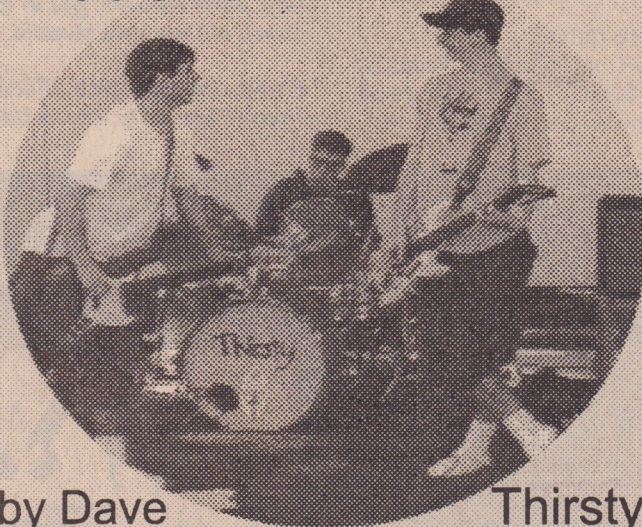
Clubs

Ok, I'm sure there are a bunch of DIY spaces that I just don't know of, since I'm in Ithaca, New York most of the year. Plus, I much rather go to an all ages house show than a club,

but here's some cool places to check out bands.

1. Maxwells - Hoboken, NJ - In the heart of Hoboken, which is an interesting little city right across the river from NYC, Maxwells is host to hundreds of touring punk rock/indie bands. The rumors have floated around about it turning into a sports bar, but I think it's all just hearsay. I've seen the New Bomb Turks, Supernova, Supersuckers, Weston, Less Than Jake, J Mascis, Noise Addict, Archers of Loaf, and a shit load of other bands here. I really like Maxwells, it's a small little restaurant/club that has cheap admission and is usually always all ages.
2. Pipeline - Newark, NJ - Not the greatest of all locations, but it's a nice sized club to see a big band play. Good Riddance, Buglite, Plow United, Lagwagon, I Farm, Puggle, and a bunch more have played here and seemed to enjoy it. They get a lot of punk/hardcore bands as well as crust/grind core stuff.

Is It Punk Yet?



by Dave

Thirsty

3. American Legion Hall - New Providence, NJ - This is just a hall that kids rent out to put on DIY all ages shows. Most of which I've been to have been successful and well attended. Weston, Doc Hopper, Sinkhole, IDK, Thirsty, I farm, SixOSeven, Plow United, Super Hi Five, and shit loads of local bands have all played here. Lots of distributors setting up tables with cool stuff.

Lately, I've been listening to and highly recommend:

Mulligan Stu/Teen Idols - split 7" on Rhetoric Records

Plow United - anything this band has out and check them out live too

J Church - everything

Propagandhi - *Less Talk, More Rock* on Fat Wreck Chords

Super Hi Five - on Creep Records (full length out soon I hear)

Weezer - *Pinkerton* LP on some major

Not Rebecca - Johann's Face Records

Discount - this band is so amazing. If you haven't heard of them already, you should be ashamed.

The Figgs - *Banda Macho* on Capitol, it's fucking awesome!

DAVE THIRSTY'S PICK OF THE ISSUE:

Lynyrd's Innards - *Amscray* LP on Harmless Records, 1437 W. Hood, Chicago, IL 60660. This punk band fucking rocks! There is so much teen angst on here,

Green Day will wanna puke all over themselves. Songs like Valentines Day Massacre, I Wanna Be Your Grrrl-friend, Yar's Revnge, Sheboygan, Yoko, and Long Distance Dedication make this album a strong contender for this years Punk Rock Awards to be held at Larry Livermore's 600 acre Mansion in Santa Barbara, California. Pretentious? I don't think so, Lynard's Innards rock out with catchy guitar riffs and snotty punk rock vocals that will have you singing along in no time. Oh yeah, best of all, there's a Simpsons out-take on here too. Soooo good!

This just in: Here at freezing cold Ithaca College, The PUNX have just upset the IC Football Team in the Semi Finals of Intramural Floor Hockey. You should have seen their faces when yours truly scored the game winning goal in overtime. Wow. There aren't too many times in life when you get such a good feeling like last night's victory. Right off the back, we walked onto the floor and their first words to us were, "Ha, look at these bunch of faggots." We wanted to beat those bunch of ignorant meatheads more than anything. And we did. So chalk another one up for the PUNX!

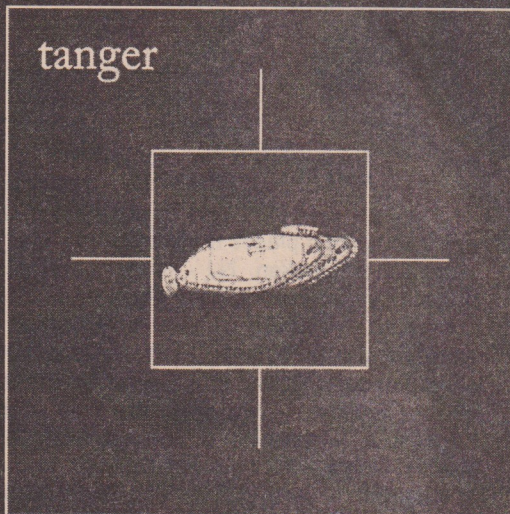
Hey, punk rockers, get in touch with Dave Thirsty and check out his zine Muddle.

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In the last couple of years, the term "Garage Music" has come to mean different things to different people and it's kinda difficult to get a handle on just what that term really means these days. A recent "Garage Night" show at Continental that I went to bears that out perfectly. The 3 bands on the bill were The Gnats, who started out as a mostly 60s garage cover band but have been going in more of a straight-ahead punk direction over the last year or so; Electric Frankenstein, who seem to take the whole 'wall-of-noise' aspect of bands like The Sonics and The Cramps to new extremes; and The Headless Horsemen who mix in a healthy dose of Stones/Kinks/Easybeats/Flamin' Groovies covers with their own similarly styled originals. All of these bands are considered garage and they all have their fans though I have to wonder how many people at that show dug all three groups. As for me, even though I liked the other 2 bands to varying extents, I'm definitely more partial to the 60s influenced bands like The Horsemen and while I do recognize the need for diversity, that's probably going to be the major focus of this column.

I absolutely love the debut album by The Bent Sceptors, "Blind Date With Destiny" on Prescription Records. I can listen to this kinda wild slop all day long and never get tired of it. This is pure basic, 3-chord, loud and fast drunken Frat Rock with plenty of that luscious Farfisa organ sound pumpin' loud and proud and an occasional wailing harp mixed in with the standard guitar, bass and drums lineup. If The Kingsmen were a bunch of twenty-something guys in the 90's, making their first album, this is what it would probably sound like. The 12 songs on here are a mixture of originals and covers, vocals and instros, and there ain't a dud in the batch. I've never had the privilege of seeing these guys play out live but on the basis of this disc, I can only imagine what a blast they must be.

Listening to "Live at The Crocodile" (Lance Rock) the latest collection of bouncy punky pop wonderfulness by The Fastbacks, it would seem that these guys (actually 2 guys and 2 girls) probably dream catchy hooks and singable choruses in their sleep. Not only that but singers Lulu and Kim have two of the loveliest voices ever to grace a 5-inch slab of digital plastic. I'm not that familiar with all their previous albums and 45s so I can't really tell you if these songs are new or not but some of these tunes such as "Hung On A Bad Peg", "On The Wall", "On Your Hands" and "Save Room For Me" all make me really wish I were there when this was recorded. If you're into upbeat pop with an emphasis on fun, this is definitely for you.

Being the pop lover that I am, I just love love LOVE the new 13-song disc by The Heartbeats "Two Down, Four To Go" (Twang!). Whatcha got here are 13 bouncy gems that sound as if the band listened nothing but "Beatles 65" and The Hollies' "Beat Group" albums for a month straight before going into the studio. Songs like "Don't Look Back", "I Won't Be There", "You Can't Come Back" and "In This Town" all sound like hits from some parallel 1965 universe. Sure, some folks would call it retro but who cares, because music of this calibre is nothing short of timeless. I wish they had another 3 CDs out that sounded just like this one and that they'd come to New York and play some live shows. What more can I say except WOW!

Regardless of whatever your particular tastes in music may be, there are some people who simply transcend all distinctions and categories. Early Elvis, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, The Beatles, The Stones, The Kinks and The Ramones are just some who come to mind. Another, whether most people realize it or not, is Bobby Fuller. While he's kinda thought of as more or less of a one-hit wonder, that one hit "I Fought The Law" is a bona fide classic and, if that were the sum total of his career, it would be enough to ensure his rightful place in Rock & Roll history. But that was far from all he did and, luckily for us, Norton Records has just released this fine 24 track collection of his early recordings entitled "El Paso Rock". These tracks were all recorded in the early 60s and show him playing in many of the popular styles of the day. Of course there's an early version of "I Fought The Law" on here which is not as slick as the hit version but, for that reason, I might actually like it even a bit better. Other favorites on here include his cover of Roy Orbison's "Rock House", the danceable "Shakedown", the title track which is a live instro workout that shows he could strum and twang that ol' gee-tar as good as anyone, "Pamela", a bouncy pop rocker that

definitely had hit potential, a totally manic version of "Keep A Knockin'" plus a whole slew of others too numerous to mention. Not only could he rock out with the best of 'em but he also had one of the best voices ever, so good in fact that there are a handful of ballads on here such as "Nancy Jean" and "You Make Me Cry" that I like every bit as much as the rockers. Bobby Fuller was truly one of the originals and it was a shame that he was cut down in the prime of his life. His music was a gift and I can only say "Thank you" to the folks at Norton for making it available to all of us.

Another true original was Link Wray who, so the story goes, virtually single-handedly accidentally in-

vented the fuzz tone. Once again, Norton Records has reissued some essential music, not just from an historical perspective, but also due to the fact that it's some of the most primal and exciting Rock & Roll ever recorded. About 6 years ago they released the 3-volume "Missing Links" series which, as the title hinted, brought to light many previously unissued recordings along with a lot of tracks that were so hopelessly rare that almost no one could ever hope to own them. Now the folks at Norton have reissued those 3 volumes on disc, adding in a heaping helping of bonus tracks to each one, plus they've also put out a 4th volume which contains some of his best work ever. Spanning most of his career, there are a number of highlights. Vol. 1 "Hillbilly Wolf" is mostly material from the mid 50s and shows his Rockabilly and Country roots as well as the beginnings of his fuzzed-out style of guitar playin. While it's my least favorite of the batch, there are still a number of shining moments.

On Volume 2 "Big City After Dark" things definitely start to heat up, with a whole bunch of totally incredible live tracks that feature some really energetic playing and, considering that they were recorded in some small club back in 1961, pretty damn fine sound quality. Other favorites include the rockers "Hold It", "Baby What You Want Me To Do" and two versions of "Walkin' Down This Street Called Love", the better take of which features some totally wailing harp and is a bonus track not on the vinyl release.

Volume 3 "Some Kinda Nut" continues the wild shenanigans with,



among other things, 2 tracks by Bunker Hill, "Little Red Riding Hood" and "The Girl Can't Dance" that are as totally, drunkenly wild as anything you'll ever hear. There are also a handful of Merseybeat type tracks recorded under the name The Spiders as well as a pair of surf/hot rod intros "Drag Strip" and "XKE" not to mention plenty more of Link's patented fuzzed-drenched twangin'. Volume 4 "Streets Of Chicago" is all previously unissued and it's definitely a more than worthy addition to the series. Faves include the beer blatin' "Friday Night Dance Party" (Pts 1 & 2), the tough instro "Street Fighter", his souped up cover of "Be-Bop-A-Lula" and the title track, not to mention a whole slew of additional live tracks. Don't be put off by the fact that this music was all recorded 30-plus years ago. These sounds are still as fresh and vibrant today as they were the day they were laid down. Listening to this, it's easy to hear where bands like Teengenerate, The Swingin' Neckbreakers and The Makers get a good part of their inspiration.

In a recent issue of Blair B's "Teen Scene" (possibly the best zine documenting the contemporary garage scene you're ever gonna read) there was a little discussion about instrumental and surf music, the gist of it being that one is not necessarily the other. The author might well have been listening to this CD by The Vice Barons entitled "Raritease" (Nitro) as he wrote those words. Perhaps it's the Farfisa organ which is mixed so up front on many of their songs but their music has much more of a garagey edge to it than most of the straight surf bands I've heard such as The Royal Crowns or The Phantom Surfers. This 24-song little silver slab o' plastic is a compilation of their first 6 Eps from 1993 and 94. If you missed 'em, now is your chance to catch up on some incredibly rockin' music that transcends any kind of genre.

Also on Nitro/Demolition Derby is "Shut The Gate Suzy, And Don't Let Me In", a nifty 19-song collection of garage type singles that they've released over the last couple of years by various bands from around the globe such as New Bomb Turks, Southern Culture On The Skids, Gaunt, Vice Barons and The A-Bones whose "Bad Boy" (included here) is possibly the wildest version of that classic

I've ever heard. Other highlights include Sin Alley's "Let's Dance", The Gorgon's souped-up cover of The Chocolate Watchband's "Don't Need Your Lovin'", the punk-poppy "Glad You're Gone" by Brand of Shame and The Peverts' take on The Tamrongs' "Wild Man" which they sing in Dutch. If you're a fan of gutsy, primal garage band music with no crossover appeal whatsoever (and I mean that in only the most complimentary of ways), then this is definitely for you.

The Mystreated have got to be one of the UK's best kept secrets and while their latest 6-song 10-inch "This Is..." (Twist) may not do anything to change that fact with the general public, lovers of totally authentic sounding mid-60s type moody folk rock ala The Byrds or "Decembers Children" era Stones will be absolutely delighted. As always, these guys have the musical and vocal chops, not to mention the superior songwriting ability to go along with their 60s obsession and every track on here is total aces, proving beyond a doubt that these guys are a whole lot more than just your basic garage-by-numbers type imitations. And, of course, it's all recorded in 100 percent mono.

If you're into the kind of movin' & groovin' fun sounds bein' cranked out by the likes of Untamed Youth, Fortune & Maltese and The Hentchmen, you're gonna flip over "Wild Wild Twist" (Larsen) by France's very own kings of stomp The Slow Slushy Boys. These guys really get into that whole early 60s frat thing with these 10 danceable tunes that are heavy on the big beat with plenty of that swingin' Farfisa blatin' away. Every song's a winner here and while this might not be the easiest album to find here in the U.S., it's a definite party picker upper and worth whatever effort it takes to seek out.

Speaking of Fortune & Maltese and (of course) the Phabulous Pallbearers, they have just released their second album "Konquer Kampus" on Hillsdale Records and it's every bit as energizing, upbeat and fun as their first one. For those of you who have never seen or heard these guys before, they're kinda similar to Untamed Youth in the way that most of their songs are inspired by those early 60s Frat-Rock records and also by how both bands feature a Farfisa



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organ mixed way up there in their overall sound. All of the 14 songs on here are originals and while I do have my favorites like "If Push Comes To Shove", "My Baby's Hearse", "Ask The Swami", "Tally Ho" and "Truth Serum", this whole album is one big non-stop party and no matter where you drop the needle (yup, as of now it's available on vinyl only), you're sure to get caught up in all the fun-filled goings-ons in no time at all.

When you come up with a concept like "Think Link Vol. 2" (Drink 'N' Drive) you almost can't miss. Get a bunch of your favorite bands together, which in this case includes Thee Headcoats, The Cowslingers, The Mono Men, Impala and others and have 'em each record a Link Wray song. So, while there are no great surprises here and even though nothing can compare with the originals, all of which are among the rawest and most vital Rock & Roll ever committed to wax, this is still such a fun package and super party liven-upper that I have absolutely no qualms about recommending to anyone.

Things I Never Expected To See Dept: This 6-song self-titled CD EP by The Cybermen on Estrus is definitely something out of left field, though I'm certainly not complaining. With one exception, these songs were released as singles or compilation tracks in the late 80s and, while I had kinda forgotten about 'em, hearing them again all in one place makes me remember just how much I used to really dig these guys. Although "Inside Outside Upside Down" always was and is still my favorite of all their songs, I gotta say that the rest of their material has also aged quite well over the last 8 years or so. Basically their style is fairly hard-edged garage mixed in with a taste of psych but, most importantly, the songs themselves are definitely there, leaving you with something to sing to yourself after the disc has finished playing. Being on Estrus this should be fairly easy to find and is certainly recommended.

AIP/Bomp has long been known for their "Pebbles" LP reissues which, along with Lenny Kaye's original "Nuggets" collection, were among the original inspirations of the whole garage revival of the mid-80s and their significance is still being felt today. For the last few years they've been slowly putting 'em all out again on CD and Volumes 9 and 10 have just hit the stores. Like their predecessors, they are a vast improvement in sound over their vinyl counterparts and, with each volume containing 24 tracks, they are quite the bargain to boot. Vol. 9 continues their peek into the Southern California mid-60s garage scene (which started about a year ago with Vol. 8) and there are some stone classics on here such as "I'm A No Count" by Ty Wagner, The Hysterics' "Won't Get Far", The Magic Mushrooms totally gonzo "I'm Gone" (arguably one of the best garage singles ever!) and the Merseybeat-ish "Someday I'll Cry" by the pre-"Dirty Water" Standells. Volume 10 does not restrict itself to any one geographical area and, for that reason, is even stronger with the likes of The Bold's "Gotta Get Some", "Don't Send Me No Flowers" by The Breakers and the incredible "I Can't Stand This Love" by The Others, one of my all-time favorite garage 45s that I was lucky enough to score an original of at the last WFMU record fair. The last decade has seen so much incredible 60s music being made available again. If you're a fanatic like me, you've got to own it all but if you just want to scout out the pick of the litter, I would say that these 2 volumes would surely fit into that category.

Hot off the presses comes the "new" Lyres CD "Early Years 1979 to 1983" on Crypt. I'd been seeing ads and hearing about this disc for at least the last 2 years and now that it's finally here, I can state with no reservations whatsoever that it was definitely worth the wait. Since their inception, The Lyres have always been one of the top Garage bands in the world and this collection of live tracks serves as a reminder that those early incredible shows that I went to back in '83 really were as fantastic as I remembered. For the most part the sound quality is superb as is the song selection. Some perennial Lyres classics such as "Soapy", "Buried Alive", "What A Girl Can't Do" and "How Do You Know" are all here, rubbing elbows with

others that I haven't heard them do in years like "Love Man", "Skinny Minnie" and "The Way I Feel About You". While this disc is valuable as a piece of Garage history, it's also some of the ballsiest Rock & Roll you're ever gonna hear and should be required listening for anyone reading this.

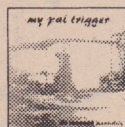
Well, that's about it for this go round. I hope you discovered something on here that piqued your interest enough to go out of your way to seek out. As with almost all the bands written about in Jersey Beat, none of 'em are getting rich at this and they can use all the support they can get. If any of you cyber types out there want to find out more about all the garage scene goings-ons around the country, there's a Newsgroup on the Internet that you oughta check out. The address is alt.music.banana~truffle. If anyone wants to get in touch with me, my e-mail address is plattruss@aol.com. See ya next issue.

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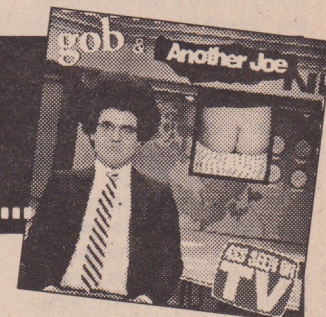


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Well, my new little house is in a fairly quiet corner of the world. Mostly surrounded by trees. My new word processor is quite quiet. I'm doing something a tad different, I am going to try listing some releases by personal preference. Which is, of course, fairly meaningless. Nonetheless, my fave CD this time is:

SUSAN McKEOWN & THE CHANTING HOUSE - *Bones* (Sheilana-Gig Music, P.O. Box 2349 New York, NY 10009-2349) An exemplary slab of aural enjoyment which springs from the heart of Ireland and the depths of the soul. Produced by Jimi Zhivago, the 13 tunes on this album were written by Susan, except for some old, old Irish tunes and chants. The first thing which struck me were the vocals: Wow, what a voice! The songs range from not bad to exceptionally good and are delivered in a manner which imparts them on your mind and then your soul. Some are kind of dark; some have Old Irish portions which are mostly incomprehensible, and some are very upbeat and catchy. It all comes together in an amazing chunk of music. Even I, who can't carry a tune in a picnic hamper and sometimes has trouble remembering my name, find myself singing some of these tunes at work. I've had this in the player continuously for about a week and wouldn't take it out yet if deadline wasn't looming. Highly recommended CD.

FIONA LEHN with F.L.U.B. (Fiona Lehn Underground Band) - *Boarder* (P.O. Box 77709 Stockton CA 95267) Lehn used to do solo acoustic gigs and this promo cd contains 4 of those. The band is comprised of 3 guys, one of whom looks like John Lennon incarnate. Unique and delightful packaging, designed by Fiona, with wrap around panels and art and a number of photos of her in various poses. The most interesting cd wrapper I have ever seen. The music is excellent. Fiona has a good voice and all of the 15 songs on this release are well performed. Personal angst is intermingled with humor; fury at the atrocities of war shares time with an amusing ditty about dogs and dog people; sorrow for a dead friend is countered by a paean to the good times of life. And a look at the so called '90s man is matched with an appeal for women to be themselves and enjoy life without worrying about their size and looks. One of the best cds I've seen in some time.

FLOATING OPERA - *Everybody's Somebody's Monster* (2603 Washington St. Lincoln, NE 68502) A well named group, which appears to have a core cast and many friends. Lead vocalist Lori Allison has a great voice and her performances are very well presented amidst a harmony of excellent instrumentation and eclectic musical arrangements. Allison used to sing for The MILLIONS, if anyone cares. Songbird Heidi Ore contributes lead vocals on a couple of cuts and multi-talented Tammy VanDe Bogart on one. Of course, the songs are all about social issues (aren't all songs, especially lately?). A fun release; a pleasure to listen to. I should mention the cool art on the liner sleeve; among the best and most

intriguing liner note art I've seen.

MARY LEE'S CORVETTE (Leonora Records) I guess that's the name of the group since lovely voiced Mary Lee Kortess has a bunch of helpers listed. The 8 songs on here were recorded live to 2 track and mixed into a delightful CD by Eric "Roscoe" Ambel. Too bad he couldn't have found 4 or 5 more. Good lyrics presented in a delightful, breathy voice which is extremely pleasing to these old ears. Mostly folksy social stuff but she gets kind of quirky with "The Status With Gladys." Very good.

BIG IRON SKILLET is a six person band with some very old-timey styles and abilities. Using such nearly passe things as mandolins

and accordions and with shared vocals, they produce a sound which is easily labeled acoustic rock but which transcends classification to cover many styles. This is a group which, based solely on 4 songs, should allow Sarah Faulkner to employ her marvelous voice on all lead vocals and Andrew Hager should best keep his mouth shut except for doing back-up. Then again, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard had extensive careers with similar voices. Sony likes them and so do I and so would you.

KELLEY GIRLS - *Everything's Wonderful and Nothing Hurts*. The Kelley Girls are actually guys - brothers Tim and Michael Kelley. They wrote the songs with help from 2 other brothers. It's decent pop. Reminds me of The Thompson Twins without the gal.

BERNADETTE McCALLION - Demo (Bruce Colfin at 212 691-5360) Here is a beautiful-voiced young lady looking to be signed to a label. The 3 songs on this demo are all slightly different and all very good. The 25 year old wrote the songs and does an excellent job of singing them as well as providing the instrumentation. (She has been playing keyboards for some N.Y. band.) The songs are melodic and meaningful; performed in Bernadette's fine voice, they become hauntingly compelling. Plans are for the release of a CD this spring. All you agents and label reps should be stampeding in this girl's direction.

Note: I am going to try and resurrect my old reviewzine *The Leighton Look* with several changes. The emphasis will be on books, CD's, videos, slick zines, and ephemera - only stuff I enjoy will be written about. The first issue will be published in time for Christmas. If you feel like investing a copy of your whatever (who knows where reviews of good stuff might appear?) send it here and mention the Look and Jersey Beat: Rodney Leighton, RR#4 Box 477A, Amherst, Nova Scotia CANADA B4H 3Y2.

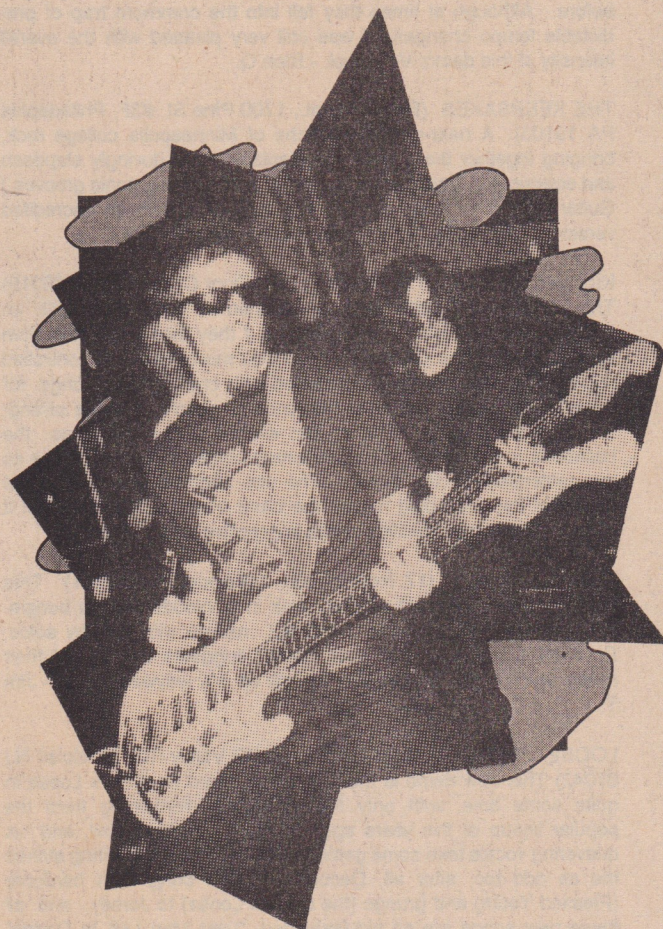


A (Rich Gaglia, 151-49 27th Avenue, Flushing NY 11354) A well-produced and thoroughly accomplished demo of strong commercial rock. It's just that Gaglia's role models - Bon Jovi and Springsteen - aren't exactly what you'd call "trendy." - Jim T.

BRIAN ALIANO - "Dead End Heroes" (PO Box 305, Union City NJ 07087) Brian has been in innumerable local bands and, coincidentally, has been my neighbor since we were both little kids. This demo of his original surfabilly instrumentals showcases his considerable talents as he plays all the instruments - drums, guitar, bass, and keyboards. Garage-heads should dig it, and any band looking for a gifted sideman should give him a call. - Jim T.

BITCHSLAP (PO Box 36, Kenosha WI 53141) Despite the seemingly politically-incorrect name, these midwestern speed-punks cram plenty of populist rhetoric into their raging faster-than-fuck hardcore. The singer sounds like an evil munchkin on meth, which is great, and they throw a nice Oi! Influence with the chanted backup vocals. Inspirational verse: "I know a great place for my spit / it's your eyes." Ah, I love the smell of testosterone in the morning. - Jim T.

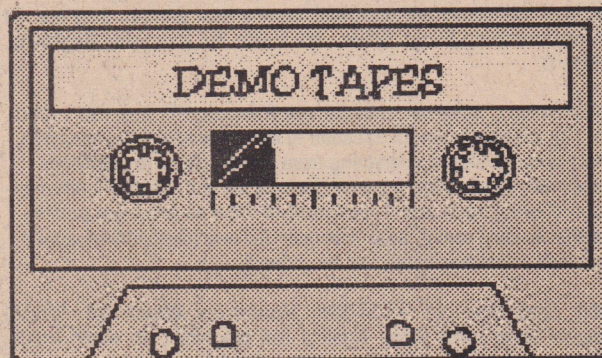
BRUTUS BIT ME - "Resuscitation"/"Throwing Cities" (PO Box 938, Old Bridge NJ 08857) Two tastes of this Central Jersey combo's jazz-inflected pop, a showcase for the mellifluous vocals of chanteuse-in-training Janis Elko. The group's basic trio is augmented here with a number of studio musicians, lending a rich, full-produced sound. The numerous tempo changes and shifting moods in each track hold your interest, as long as you're in the mood for something tart and sophisticated - a Tequila Sunrise instead of the Bud and root beer we usually serve around here. - Jim T.



Mooney Suzuki

C4 - "Demo" (1201 Craig Rd., Knoxville TN 37919) Ultra-low fidelity demo of simple three-chord Screeching Weasel-style punk. It has a nice bounce and the tunes are kinda catchy but I could have done without all the distortion and tape noise. - Jim T.

COTTONMOUTH - "Skate or Die" (519 High Street SE Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102-1845) This demo was a tale of two bands. The first side was a fun loving, high energy explosion of varied musical formats which sounded like it was destined to be part of the next X-Games event. The band raved about how it was part hip-hop, funk, punk, hardcore, but don't even worry about all the



labels - this first side of this tape just rocks with the intensity and sound of "Join the Army"-era Suicidal Tendencies combined with "Uplift Mofa Party Plan"-style Chilli Peppers. Along with their sense of fun came socially conscience lyrics, especially on songs like "American Slouch" and "Alice is a Junkie". I cannot understand what happened on the flip side of this tape. Cottonmouth, which displayed such originality on the A side, falls into constant cliches over the course of the last six songs. At least two of the songs, most notably "Harder than You" and "Punk," are complete throwaway tracks. This was disappointing, for the band has a real deal of promise. However, when they try to solely be a hardcore band, they fall terribly short. Far too often, bands that attempt to mix genres sound forced and lack sincerity. This is not the case here. When Cottonmouth blend their numerous influences, they produce music that is stirring and energizing. This is the side of the band that should be explored. Hardcore elements add well to what they do, but they cannot depend on them to carry their songs. If they can focus on being what they talk so much about, meaning a band that tries to incorporate a lot of different styles, they will be fine. If they just want to be a bragging, pseudo hardcore band, they do not have a chance. - Rich Q.

DEPRESSOR (POB 472007, SF, CA 94147-2007) I recall reading a criticism about Jersey Beat wherein the writer complained about reviewers not being familiar with the style of music they were reviewing. I wonder if that author was talking about me? Anyway - death metal style music is not something I listen to much - mainly because it all just sounds the same after 15 minutes. That said - this was at least original enough to have some decent breaks and segues to break it up. The band cites Godflesh and Amebix as primary influences. I'll take their word for it. The song "Human Scum" was OK. I think they'd go over big in Florida where this style of music is still popular. - Tom B.

FARMBOY (6640 Springside Avenue Downers Grove IL. 60516) A very well recorded and interesting demo from this Illinois band. Both tracks had solid, addictive grooves which acted as the backbone of these very radio friendly songs. I would definitely want to hear more from this band, for their musical abilities were impressive. The two songs offered on this demo were straight forward rock/pop fare, but it was obvious that there were other elements bubbling underneath

the surface. People should pay attention and follow the progress of this band. While I enjoyed the tracks that I heard, I have the feeling that I was not exposed to all this band can truly offer. This all too brief demo left me wanting to hear more, which I think is a good sign. - Rich Q.

GET HIGH (16 B Winter St. Somerville Mass. 02144) The name of this band leaves a little to be desired, but musically they are on the right track. The vocals stand out here as strong and impressive. Unfortunately, there are moments on this release when the band tries to capture a ferocious hardcore spirit, but usually ends up sounding flat. However, when they have a more controlled attack, they deliver a thick, heavy barrage of guitar fueled aggression. In the end, while they are not breaking any new ground, they are not simply rehashing things either. It's a raw, but promising beginning. - Rich Q.

THE HAND - "Mule Me" (Messenger Records, PO Box 1607, NYC 10113) An album-length cassette of industrial-strength weirdness. The Hand dabbles in everything from lounge-y jazz to quirky pop standards, with grating multi-tracked vocals and unusual instrumentation. Frank Zappa and Ween come to mind as reference points but that doesn't really catch how ominous and (deliberately) annoying these minor-key tunes can be. - Jim T.

HED (200 Main St. #104-398, Huntington Beach CA 92648) Beastie Boys meet Rage Against the Machine. In other words, white-guy party raps over testosterone-fueled industrial roar. Surprisingly - given how many dumb-jock frat-boy outfits have flubbed this formula - Hed kicks major butt. Full-length coming soon on Jive Records and I can't wait to hear it. - Jim T.

HURTIN' BUCKAROOS - 3 *Stories* (Joe Ferry Music) One dude wrote everything. No idea who the female vocalist is but she sounds good... and young. Track 2 contains the words: "I feel old, I can't get no fornication." Hell, baby, come to Shinimicas, Nova Scotia! Seriously, these are 3 long cuts which are an amalgam of rap, hip hop, spoken word, sampling and noise and probably some other things. None of which normally interest me but it works very well on this release. The gal deserves credit, because I believe it's her voice and delivery which makes this work. - Rodney L.

INDUSTRIAL FATE - "Suburban Death Squad" (609-298-7070). 8-song demo from this Jersey I guess you can call it "Hardcore" band. Hardcore for the music, and half death metal on the vocals. It's pretty cool, the dance parts are excellent. I just wish the recording was a little clearer. There's no treble at all, and with me being a drummer, that annoyed me, 'cause I gotta have my treble! - Phil P.

JENIFER CONVERTIBLE - Demo (No address available) Frontman Jim Santo handed this to me at a dinner party, not to review but just so I could listen to it. It didn't come with an address, song titles, or any information. But after one listen, I had to ask him for permission to spread the word. JenCon has been one of NYC's best kept secrets for a while now, but this new material brings them to a whole new level. Loud burly Husker Du-ish guitars and vocals rock out over sublimely hummable melodies and enigmatic lyrics, frequently having something to do with fast cars (makes sense, given the band's name!) Happily, I've just learned that this will soon be released as a CD on a new NYC indie label. In the meantime, if Jenifer Convertible happens to drive into your neck of the woods, hop in for the ride of your life. - Jim T.

KGB (164 Burlington Avenue Spotswood NJ 08884) This is a true DIY release with an honest garage sound. KGB plays fast, mid-80's style hardcore with snarled vocals buried deep into the mix. This is a young band full of attitude and energy. The majority of the lyrical content on this five song release deals with frustration and distrust of political and social leaders. They are able to create politically-



Farmboy

tinged binges of hate without sounding like you have heard it all before. Although at times they fell into the common trap of predictable tempo changes, I was still very pleased with the overall intensity of this demo. Very cool. - Rich Q.

THE KEEPSAKES (Bause Mgmt., 1700 Pine St. #3F, Philadelphia PA 19103) A near-perfect pastiche of Minneapolis college rock, bringing together the best of the Replacements (lovingly slapdash and eclectic pop tunes) and Husker Du (ear-bashing sonic grooves.) Guitar rock at its best. Bonus: The tape ends with an uncredited version of the 'Mat's "If Only You Were Lonely." - Jim T.

KILOWATTHOUR (114 Parker St. 1st. Floor Cincinnati OH 45219) This Ohio based outfit plays a variation of indie rock, with an emphasis on the rock. They sound as if they take inspiration from early Sonic Youth or Dinosaur Jr. with their mix of rock and controlled noise. They are obviously concerned with crafting their songs, for the intelligence and clarity of the lyrics is matched by the strong, unique guitar playing. The rhythm section acts not only as the backbone of the sound, but occasionally comes through to shine as the centerpiece of the music. The one negative here is that the mixing of this recording makes the band sound a little thin, but it does not mask the creativity of this impressive outfit. - Rich Q.

THE LEMMINGS (17 Royal Court, Lakewood NJ 08701) This South Jersey power trio seems stuck in a Woodstock-era boogie-rock groove (think Hendrix, Santana,) replete with lengthy solos. Even the first track, "The Nam Song," suggests they've got their heads stuck in the late Sixties. Boogie on, my wayward sons. - Jim T.

LOOSE - "Public Elf Rage" CD demo (42 Valley Rd., Montclair NJ 07042) This new demo is the first we've heard from NJ's Loose in quite some time, with only Paul Decolator remaining from the popular lineup of five years ago. Paul is singing now, and his quavering vocals take some getting used to. The songwriting strikes me as odd too; after all, Decolator helped bring both hardcore (Pleased Youth) and grunge (the original Loose) to Jersey, and all these new songs are so old-fashioned. "Last Man Left In Dodge" boogies like old Thin Lizzy, and "Suicide Cafe" bounces along like pre-punk power-pop. Even the lyrics are a little off; like "downtown

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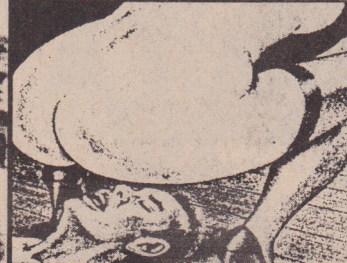
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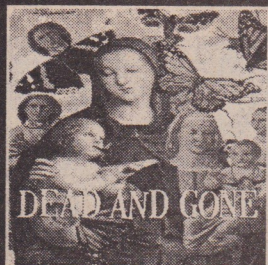
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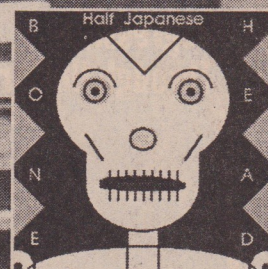
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more demo tapes

at the Apollo..." in "White Boy Harlem." Shouldn't it be *uptown* at the Apollo? The horns are a nice touch, but where's the groove? Maybe it's just because I've salivated over everything Paul has touched before (his credits include the seminal NJ/HC group Pleased Youth, and of course the old Loose, arguably the best unsigned NJ band of the early Nineties,) and my expectations were unreasonably high, but these new songs sound a little *too* loose, if you know what I mean. - Jim T.

THE LOVED ONES - "Fifteen Minutes With..." (PO Box 4282, Highland Park NJ 08904) A soft pop/rock combo built around the vocals of Robin Renee, playing what Mickey Ween used to call "Rutgersmusic" - Sixties-influenced pop, in the style of onetime New Brunswick faves Tiny Lights and Frozen Concentrate. They even manage to make Elvis Costello ("Green Shirt") sound as soft and cuddly as an angora sweater. - Jim T.

MOONEY SUZUKI - "Soul" (PO Box 293, New York NY 10009) Bright and head-bobbingly energetic, these freshfaced kids throw down their catchy power-pop with the sassy appeal of the boys next door, fueled with crazy Feelies rhythms and plenty of sonic pizzazz. The live show is not to be missed. My new favorite band. - Jim T.

ORPHAN (9 Hope Drive, Sayreville NJ 08872) An impressive debut by a NIN-styled industrial combo. Power, anger, angst, and some cool guitar effects shoved right down your throat with a take-no-prisoners attack. Unfortunately they didn't send any information, just the tape, but I'd definitely like to find out more. - Jim T.

pete. (It's A Gas Mgmt., 1184 Fischer Blvd. #2b, Toms River NJ 08753) You can't help but notice the sterling production (in the Butch Vig style of dynamic hi-fi grunge) on this four-song tape, with songs that revisit familiar Gen X topics like self-loathing and failed romance. But it's also impossible to avoid the fact that these Newark boys do a better Pearl Jam than those kids in Silverchair. - Jim T.

ROMPECABEZA (Speight Rhue, 4609 Jenkins Rd., Winston-Salem NC 27105) Two tracks of eyebrow-raising weirdness that shift from delicate clarinet intros to bellowing balls-to-the-floor lunkhead hardcore and back again. I am intrigued. - Jim T.

SHELF LIFE (Max, 2211 Broadway #5E, New York NY 10024) Hi-octane grunge with boy-next-door vocals. Sincere, fresh, and these kids can rock. Sounds pretty good for 4-track basement production. And not that it matters, but the band is younger than the tykes in Silverchair. - Jim T.

SWING LOW (473 Fifth Ave. #1, Brooklyn NY 11215) There's nothing wrong with classic-rock influences when you cop from the best. Swing Low combines distortion-tinged dual guitars with melancholy lyrics that never degenerate into Gen X whining. Think Neil Young covering the Stones' "Wild Horses." The expressive twin lead guitars color the emotional intensity of the lyrics, while the rhythm section remains tastefully low-key. - Jim T.

ROBERT BURKE WARREN (113 St. Marks Place #4E, New York NY 10009) An impressive demo by this NY scene veteran that ranges from Gram Parsons-ish country to full-tilt rockers. Warm, effusive vocals, strong melodies, exquisite musicianship... As our Rod Leighton might say, a perfect tape to put on in the background on those lazy days when you just want to lounge around the house and feel good. - Jim T.

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BIRMINGHAM 6 - Error Of Judgement (Cleopatra)

Can I just point out how AWFUL using the "swing-time" in electro comes off? Puppy tried it, KMFDM always does and the Dildoes gave it a stab once, & it's never worked! STOP! Anyway "The Kill" on here suffers from this problem too....it's just silly sounding. As if B6's vocals weren't all Euro-groovy & all, they (for some reason,) called in Jean Luc Demayer (x242) for some of his signature crooning and once "Summertime Is Over" kicks in, things really start to heat up on here for a while, with the occasional snarly B6 as a back-up vox. The excellent B6 electro-hum backs it all up. An EBM tour-de-force!

CHEMLAB - East Side Militia (FIFTH CLOM/MetalBlade)

In a perfect marriage between Ministry's (initial) bouts with aggressive gee-tars and the newer European sequenced MIDI samplings (ala Cybertec & Cubanate,) NYC-via-DC transplants ChemLab hit back hard with sum new material after far too long an absence.

Being in fact the last album to be recorded at (the now infamous & since relocated) Chicago Trax studio, it's of little surprise that *East Side...* is one of the better sounding 'industrial' products out there. Crisp production, Clean arrangements & well mixed, even while the vocal effect on (lead off track) "Exile On Mainline" has Jared strategically placed down & out, sounding as if he's fallen into an open drain-cover & has been forced to modern-in his vocal track!

Another development of interest with ESM (the Lab's 3rd, by the by,) is the unstinted newly acquired depth of Jar's off nasal East Coast twang. Tracks like "Vera Blue" offer up an almost Iggy Pop-like deep melodic vox over a "Cuts You Up"-styled Peter Murphy backing -- this is not your 'typical industrial fare.' And if you preferred the Stooges over Ig's Bowieinspired solo outings, Chem-Lab have got a number for you too: "Latex" comes complete with wah-wah gee-tars, thrashing drum patterns & vocal-grunts at no x-tra charge!

"Low Grade Fever" (Bauhaus meets NIN & "Pink" (Karen Finley meets Download,) show us a more subdued, experimental Lab that fills in the gaps to make this one hell'va diverse release. If only KMFDM & Front Line Assembly were even 1/2 this 'well-rounded' there'd be a much better chance for the electro-industrial "Midi-Ghetto" as Jared likes to call it, to follow NIN to it's rightful place on the major labels. More.... Please!

CHRIST ANALOGUE - In Radiant Decay (ReConstriction)

The first thing that strikes you about this release is just HOW MUCH Christ Analogue has turned into a ReCon band since their last [indie] cd! From the dense electronic backings that sound like 16volt

outtakes to the sung, melodic, undistorted vocals. At times, the "funky" programming & clean production will remind you of Sister Machine Gun, ... a lot; & there's a distorted 808 kick (ala Download,) here'n'there for even more of the familiarity-factor. while "...Decay" is all well & good, it seems as if the Analogues have traded in their more abrasive sounds of the past for a more commercial approach in a similar style to a lot of the other 'underground' NIN-tribute types. Fair, but without much character of it's own.



COVENANT - "Theremin" EP (21st Circuitry)

Ab-so-lutely Amazin' euro-industrial -disco. I repeat: DISCO! If you can pardon the analogy, imagine 242 forcing themselves on ABBA (...ALL of ABBA!) That is the sound of this beat-heavy euro-electro heaven! Production as innovative as fellow Europeans Haujobb & a nice clean strong vocal on top to give it almost a nuRo-feel. "Figure Head" is my pick-hit, but all 5 cuts (w/2rmxs) on here truly shine. Pick this up NOW!

ENERGY RECORDS -1997 label comp (Energy)

Starting off strong with the aggressive grove of HanzelundGretyl's "...Agenda" and Heavy Water Factory's "Place Of Torment," an excellent EBM chug with driving drums, vox & cut-up samples to die for, it's looking to be a good year for NYC's Energy Records. Other standout cuts include the techno-goth of Sunshine Blind and NY's Bile. At \$4 (the price of a cd5) you really just can't beat this!

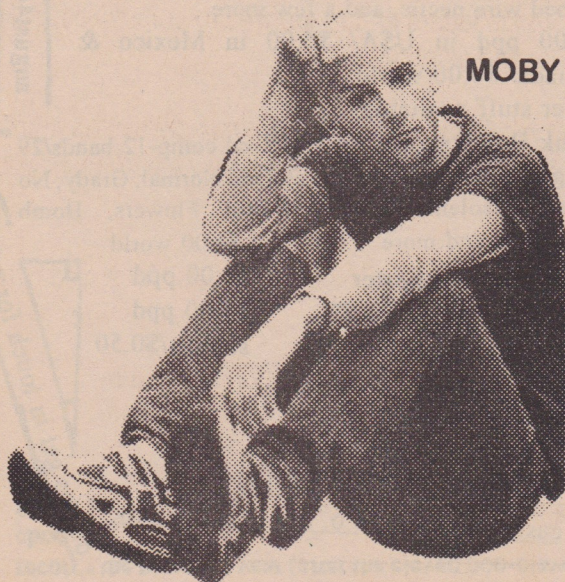
FARFLUNG - The Raven That Ate the Moon (Flipside CD)

Psychedelic moog-infested rock here, with flanged guitars to boot. The vocals are suitably androgynous as well, making this kick all over crap like the PinkDots. I'm not quite sure how the 4 index trax break down into the 6 songs listed; So... I think, "Candied Electronic Atmospheres" starts like your typical Barrett-Floyd #, then breaks-off into synth swells on Rolad Juno-s that make this effort one heck've a Time-Trip. Not exactly what I expected, but groovy nun-th-less.

HYPNOTIC SOUNDS - 17 Trips In Trance (Hypno/Cleopatra)

Beginning things with the ever-groovy Future Sounds Of London was a good (if safe) move on here, Hypno's latest label sampler. Thick beats & a really cut up loopy 'flower-power' sound dominates the FSOL track "Expander." System7 up next just takes forever to get going, but once Youths beats kick in there's just NO turning back. Sweden's LCD goes in for more an Analogue-Bubblebath-Fest ala Detroit with vintage blurbs & bleeps, possibly my favourite track on here! LCD, maybe the band to finally kick the Chemical's arse outta the ring! This comp is well worth any price as there just ISN'T a single bad track to be found!

MOBY - Animal Rights (Electra)



MOBY - *Animal Rights* (Electra)

Maybe Moby called this release "*Animal Rights*" because it's just an album's worth of his pre-mid-life crisis' return to a "youthful" & "primitive" punk rock approach. The problem here of course is that we all know & love Moby for his pure electronic techno. Imagine if Kenny G ditched the sax & picked up a chainsaw (Moby's departure is JUST as radical.) "Dead Sun" (doesn't) set the stage for over an hours worth of Moby (he of x-genius) imitating any SST act from the mid-8Ts (badly.) This is the kind of record that most bands release to get out of a record contract. Absolutely Awful & he will surely lose all the 'dance' credibility he's spent years building up. There's no excuse for this bad h/c punk rock!

MORE MORTAL KOMBAT - various- (TVT)

The follow-up to the supposedly extremely successful Mortal K-1 starts off with 2 techno trax before settling down into a roll-call of the current industrial-rock-crop: Sister Machine Gun, ChemLab & Cubanate are all represented with trax off their new albums. But this cd definitely gets high marks for the old-skool techno sounds of Juno Reactor, Gundrum Gut & Loaded (a Dylan "of ChemLab" side project.)

PIG - *Sinsation* (Nothing/Interscope)

Well, this is deranged, alright. The question however, remains, is it good? Does it matter? It's on Trent Reznor's label, it must be good! Like a 9ts Alice Cooper - it must be nice for Trent to unleash his high-school inspirations on the masses of unsuspecting teens listening to 'normal' music like Marilyn Manson & White Zombie. Some of the orchestration invokes a Laibach dramatic, raising the kitsch factor to a respectable level & making this the album Ministry's "Filth Pig" (umm... no pun intended,) should've been!

SIELWOLF - *Magnum Force* (VanRichter)

From the looks of the copyright this five year old album is decent noise-industrial, with more than it's fair share of really annoying metal gee-tar riffing to detract from it's appealing clanging aspects. "Magnum force" is it's chugging danse four crasher & some of the soundscape that appear on here later are worthwhile as the [thankfully] omit the metal guitars in favor of some more traditional industrial "metal."

SUNSHINE BLIND - *Liquid* (Energy)

Liquid finds Caroline & Co. rolling out the BLACK carpet & you my dear Goth are the lucky guest. Haunting, emotive, deep & dark are all fitting words to describe their sound, yet mere words do this disc an injustice. Any fan of Siouxsie, The Sisters or The Cure could easily fit this right into their collection as a nu & original entry to that talent. Possibly my only complaint is in the over-enunciation of some of the (loudly mixed) vocals. While Caroline's voice is fantastic, it seems it might benefit from a lethal injection of: Mystery, every now & again... Check this now!

UNHOLY ERECTION - *2nd Cumming* (UEHQcassette)

Hmmm... A Homo-Erotic Bevis & Butthead? -or- Ween as "boy-toy?" -or- Just two sick-fucks from Pennsylvania with a drum machine & four track cassette recorder? YOU decide! An amusing (potent, if with limited potential) outing for U.E., who you may remember from when... um... uh... when you were 15 years old, had your first six-pack & tried some of that "locker-room" humor (glory holes at no xtra charge, of course!) Some of this is genuinely funny, with a hard focus on Male Genitalia and Rap-mockery. And cumming at a time when Howard Stern is enjoying massive mainstream popularity U.E. may just find their, er... "element."

WORK OUT - *Continuous Dance Mix* (Atlantic)

Excellent selection of Disco-divas by Out Magazine. Fairly (& barely) mixed by Jonny 'D' DeMario (whoever that is?) -- I'm surprised they couldn't get any of the 'name' remixers on here to spin this stuff together better. And the entire mix sounds monophonic -

when it kicked in, I had to go check the cables on my surround speakers thinking I had knocked them out. Highlights include "The Bomb" (too bad it aint a remix,) Jimi Somerville's classic "HeartBeat" & Jomanda's hit from years back "Make My Body Rock," along with an excellent Junior remix of (whatever happened to) the WaterLillies "Never Get Enough." While this comp compiles some great house-disco-club music, you're better off picking up the original cds of all this (unless of course you have something against full-stereo sound & good beat mixing.)



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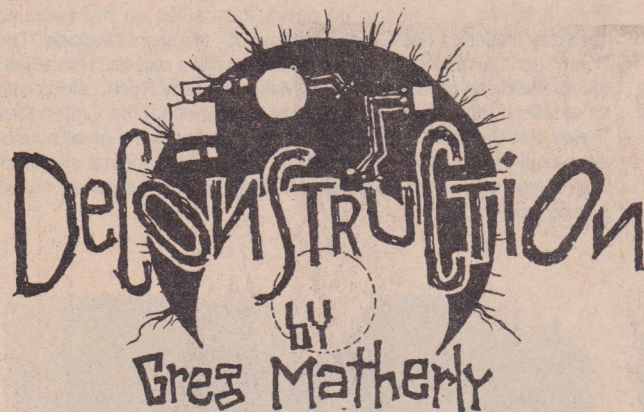
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Deconstruction

BY
Greg Matherly

Welcome again to the best in experimental, noise, and nontraditional music. If the music you need to feed your head is devoid of formula, here's the place to get hooked up. Shaking off the winter bums can be a whole lot easier if you drench yourself in some high fidelity brain crackles laden with heavy space train staples. Need help? Instructions for deconstruction: Gawk at the words, gravitate toward your taste, and exercise your memory and money to acquire the music your head craves.

Remember the ART OF NOISE -- the most widely known pop-noise group of the '80's? Their releases are surfacing again for the select breed who enjoyed their mixtures of quirky realism long before the CD; and with the introduction of a few new AON compilations, perhaps a new audience will be gained. "The Best Of The Art Of Noise" contains 10 of their most memorable (and most goofy) ventures into modern absurdity. Now you can once again hear the extremely dated "Paranoia", which features that bizarre pixel deity of the lost Eighties, Max Headroom. Don't forget the Art's version of "Peter Gunn", complete with the samplings of Duane Eddy. Listening to this stuff again after ten years, I am able to see a whole new vision of my youth -- apathetic and headstrong in a flimsy, consumer/dreamland world. Well now that I think about it, I don't guess that much has changed. Everything just seems quite a bit larger. . . but the past is nonexistent, so that would only be fitting. After some 10 years, the ART OF NOISE still retains the power to morph absurdity into down-to-earth ground-wires, but now a smooth, creamy wave of novelty saturates the procedure. I would highly recommend The Best Of. . . compilation for any person who wasn't a part of, but is interested in, American pop culture of the Eighties.

"The Art Of Noise: The Ambient Collection" could be considered as a payment of dues made by all of today's ambient-house DJ's. Given the number of times that AON has been sampled and otherwise used in the house scene, it's only fitting that such homage as this should be paid. The 13 tracks that make up this disc form a union between the past and the present which clearly points out the evolution of the house/dub genre. Would there be a Future Sounds Of London without the prep work of the ART OF NOISE? Doubt it. The beauty of conscious procreation, kids -- evolution staring you in the face. These tracks were compiled and remixed by Youth and Alex from The Orb, the latter of which has borrowed from AON on countless occasions. No ambient collection should be without this one.

The soundtrack accompanying *To Have And To Hold*, the new film by Australian director John Hillcoat, is available now on Mute Records. As with Hillcoat's prior work, including his 1988 picture, "Ghosts. . . Of The Civil Dead", his companions and collaborators this time around include Blixa Bargeld, Nick Cave, and Mick Harvey. The soundtrack score, minus two vocal tracks, is intense, gripping, and passionate. If you are an admirer of composer Arvo Part, this soundtrack will be inviting and rather familiar -- perhaps too familiar.

What the brash Euro-boys of postmodernity have constructed here is a score that can be mistaken, with absolutely no effort, for the work of Part himself. Being a high admirer of this underground trio, as well as a Part aficionado, I'm hesitant to condemn the boys for this seemingly unjust parade. The soundtrack is poignant and richly textured, heavy in emotion and even insightful, so why the big deal? I guess I will choose to shift the weight from my American haunches and recall a view from Jean-Luc Godard: In America, plagiarism. . . In Europe, homage. As far as the film goes, I've yet to see it. But I do understand that in *To Have And To Hold*, Hillcoat works with the melodrama as it was in the 40's and 50's, and he maintains the same romantic space of desire and impossibility that Hitchcock defined so well in the relationship.

Well it's finally here -- the new album by the quintessential scientist's of the post-avant garde, EINSTURZENDE NEUBAUTEN. "Ende Neu" (Mute) hit the racks late last year and it's almost taken me that long to fully appreciate it. Blixa and the boys have abstained from focusing on listener disintegration tactics and opted instead to hone their craftsmanship in new compositional areas. Some might object to the Neubauten of today -- picking up a power tool to highlight a piece rather than centering the entire work around it -- but the destruction has already been performed and now they are erecting the brave new anti-building of musical art. Exploring intricate processions of time and toying with melodious harmonies, Neubauten seem to have matured gracefully. The opening cut, "Was ist ist" is a furious, fast-paced slander on the constant wanting of mankind while simultaneously serving as a tongue in cheek remark on the absolute power which overrules impossibility. From there "Ende Neu" (ending-new) continues to musically re-write the band's style using familiar topics such as ethereal chaos ("Die Explosion Im Festspielhaus"), cosmic complacency ("The Garden"), revolt ("Installation No.1"), and even a Kafka-esque piece, "Der Schacht Von Babel". I was concerned about Mark Chung leaving the band but it's obvious that the remaining members have taken the time to contribute to the void left by Chung. "Ende Neu" is a precision fed matrix of audio-encrypted knowledge. Not like the Neubauten of old, but like the Neubauten of now.

The first release by a new project that is going by the name of HOVERCRAFT, has hit the streets. Now if you listen to grape vines, you're going to know that HOVERCRAFT is rumored to be the brainchild of one said, Edward Vedder and his betrothed. If this bit of information is true, I cannot constrain myself from making an opinion based upon my absolutely horrid relationship with Pearl Jam -- this is the best thing that Vedder has ever been involved with. The five track release, "Akathisia" is swimming primordial with crescendoing waves of six-string gain. A jewel of distorted, dischordant, trance frequencies that alternates rhythm as good as any high energy force in a state of flux. Imagine a scientific experiment where you act as subject and supervisor, the laboratory is host to a Sonic

Youth private party, and you're testing the reality of earth's visible energy waves. Same effect. If you can't imagine that, the pounding drones and segmented, sonic guitar implements that make up "Akathisia" are truly hat you need. This is not a candy coated space voyage, but neither is it too dark oppressive. HOVERCRAFT captures a rather strong dissonant flow by means of a subtle, almost gentle method. Like Dante baby steps. With titles like, "Angular Momentum", and "De-Orbit Burn", you know it's worth the clams.

In the great tradition of fine noise everywhere, MERZBOW and MAN IS THE BASTARD NOISE have joined forces to produce a heinous blasphemy to the compact disc. Just when you thought you had expanded your palate enough to appreciate all music, noise knocks at your door. What to do? Listen. Listen real close. What MERZBOW and M.I.T.B.N. are so good at, is creating a confrontational bombardment of sonic, swirling chaos. Sound familiar? If you've got a 9 to 5 job it should. A cacophony of tonal slough immerses the listener in an extremely fast psychedelic ride of agitated introversion that is confrontational and quite challenging.

DEUTSCH NEPAL have been contributing to the darker sea of industrialism since 1992, and now there is a 10 song CD that documents a different side of Nepal's evolution. "Comprendido... time stop!" (Release) takes the listener on a slow ride through tribal constructions of brooding energy, waves of trance inducing electronic manipulation, and a series of non-linear time shifts maintained by various metaphysical samplings. This disc contrasts with the aggressive industrial sound associated with DEUTSCH NEPAL today. "Comprendido..." is a dark organicism which grows on you, whether you like it or not.

On the flipside, TRIAL OF THE BOW's "Rite of Passage" (Release) clearly demonstrates the eternal power of Middle Eastern instruments. Robert Gallina and Matthew Skarajew create a journey of mystical melodies by means of the oud, ghaita, Tibetan singing bowl, tabla, saz, Bansuri flute, and the hammered dulcimer. "Rite of Passage" teases the soul out of its rickety shack of time by enveloping the listener in the never dying, wholly objective world. The many landscapes presented hear represent the timelessness of the world, the power of music, and they also serve to help us forget of the duality of existence. It's kind of funny getting ancient/spiritual inspiration on CD. Reminds me of a traditional Zen saying, which could easily be said today after loading up the stereo with TRIAL OF THE BOW: First there is a mountain,/ Then there is no mountain,/ Then there is. Good stuff here, taken from when 'formula' wasn't synonymous with 'sheep'.

That's it for this issue. Direct all comments, questions, and new releases to **deconstruction**, c/o Schedule One Productions, P.O. Box 2771 M.T.S.U., Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Email: dr.matherly@prodigy.com Our web page is in the shop and should return sometime this summer. Keep your ears open and stay plugged in!

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COMING THIS SPRING: 1997 ASBURY MUSIC AWARDS!

Lookin' fer some boss new tuneage to put the glide in your stride and a dip in your hip? Look no further, dad, 'cause you done found what you seek. The all new springtime fresh Garage Disease has it stacked high for your listening and dancing pleasure! I haven't been around in awhile due to a little misunderstanding with the powers that be, but it's good to be back (releatively speaking) and we have a lot of stuff to get through, so just like always, LET's GET REAL REAL GONE FOR A CHANGE!!

Great gosh a mighty! The Mighty Mummies are back from the dead (sort of) with a great new collection of post-mortem fidelity thin trash called "RUNNIN' ON EMPTY, Vol. 1" that'll take the enamel offa yer friggin' teeth! Side one contains the very first recordings ever laid down by the wrapped ones (circa late '88-'89) and side two contains part of a 1991 club date, with typical Mummies fidelity to boot. My fave rave of the year!

From the mean streets of Motown comes one of the hottest intro platters to pass through my palms in a long time, "SURF QUAKE", the debut 12 inch (I think) from THE VOLCANOS. These Motor City wailers lean more towards the Dick Dale side of the street stylistically, but they ain't poundin' nothin' out-by rote. These guys got it. Another fine contemporary surf band. One that we can all be proud of. God bless us everyone. Kicks from the center of the earth, baby.

Deep in the heart of Texas (Austin to be precise) there's a little ol' band called The 1-4-5's and they kick out some of the best (and silliest) contemporary garage slop that's ever been pushed through my ears. Their latest release, "ROCK INVASION" is no exception. Every song title contains the word "rock", as in "Wanna Rock?", "Rock Vigilantes", That Ain't No Rock" and "Ricky Ricky Rock". Silly or not, these guys (and girl) rock their tail feathers off. They remind me a lot of classic X, with their cat-chick vocal trade-offs and searing punkabilly riffs, even though it's played with the competence of Billy Childish. They also promote the use of protective headgear for rock bands. If you really like these guys, you might wanna look up The Teen Titans. Two members of The 1-4-5's can be found slumming here, and they are even sillier! (Write the Teen Titans at Peek-A-Boo Records c/o Higdon 10122 N.Manton, San Antonio, TX 78213) (ESTRUS HI-FI, PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227 USA)

From the home of the King, Memphis, Tennessee, comes the sounds of those teen faves, THE OBLIVIANS, with their hot new platter, "POPULAR FAVORITES", on the tough-as-nails CRYPT RECORDS. Though I didn't see how they could ever do it, these cats have improved upon their CRYPT debut slab, "SOUL FOOD". This is gutbucket R&B punk n' roll, the way the gods intended. Ferocious slash and burn rawk rawk rawk. Imagine Hound Dog Taylor backed by the Pagans and you start to get the photo op, greaseball. Got the kids a-screamin' for that BIG BEAT!!!! (CRYPT RECORDS 1409 W. MAGNOLIA, BURBANK, CA 91506)

While we're on the subject of gutbucket guitar trash, let's not forget Japan's king of the trash ass guitar, GUITAR WOLF, with his MATADOR RECORDS debut, "MISSILE ME". High energy, bottom of the barrel production (kinda like the late great TEENGENERATE) with a definite mid-60's punk vibe that brings to mind everyone from THE STOOGES to PUSSY GALORE. I like these guys better every

album, even though the first two are fuckin' awesome, this is is even better than "KUNG FU RAMONE" and "WOLF ROCK". No matter how you slice it, this record is amazing. You cannot live without this record. Eat it.

Also from Casa de Matador is the new slab o' wax from Mississippi blues stomper RL BURNSIDE, "A ASS POCKET OF WHISKEY". This is the real deal- greasy electric Delta blooze, just drippin' in it! Recorded on the afternoon of 2-6-96 in Holly Springs, Mississippi and backed by none other than the BLUES EXPLOSION, this thang'll kick you in yer ass and leave ya hoppin' mad. Motherfuckin' chaos on wheels!! And check out RL's other shit while you're at it. He's got some stuff out on Fat Possum Records that is amazing.

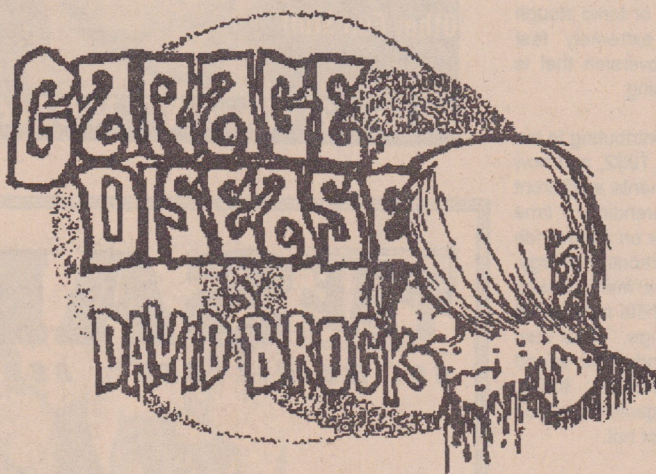
Last, but certainly not least, also from our amigos at Matador, is the amazing new 12 inch from Mr. Jon Spencer and The BLUES EXPLOSION, "NOW I GOT WORRY". Getting back to a much more rawer sound that hearkens back to the days of PUSSY GALORE and the "CRYPT STYLE" LP instead of the STAX-

influenced "ORANGE", this one includes a track with a guest appearance from Mr. Memphis himself, RUFUS THOMAS! This is another essential slab. This guy never put out a shitty record when he fronted PUSSY GALORE and he has yet to put out a shitty JSBX record. What a fuckin' track record this guy has! This one should be pretty easy to get, so you ain't got no excuse not to have it. Get off yer good fer nuthin' ass and go get this damn rekkid. You will not be sorry. Oh yeah, number four of IN THE RED's and JSBX's "Jukebox" series 7 inch, "Get With It" b/w "Down Low" is available. Not only

does it come filled with the quality sounds that we have come to expect from the Blues Explosion, but it also comes with one o those little cards to stick in your jukebox. So go buy a jukebox. (Matador Records 676 Broadway 4th Floor, NYC, NY 10012; In The Red 2627 E. Strong Pl., Anaheim, CA 92806)

This time around, our friends at Get Hip! have sent a virtual smorgasboard of international punk rock. From locales as far away and exotic as Spain and Pittsburgh, your sure to find something that'll tantalize your tastebuds. From the Basque country comes the hard edged punk of La Secta and their new single "Kill City" b/w "Hard Me On". The singer has always reminded me of the ol' Igster, and on this single, not only did they do a cover of "Kill City", but they even ripped the cover art off the original "Kill City" lp. This single is rock and roll at it's meanest and ugliest. If you knew what was good for you, you'd stay away, but since you probably don't give a shit, grab this fucker fast. This is the kinda shit yer mom warned you about. Check out their shit on Sympathy and on Munster Records out of Spain. It all fuckin rocks.

All the way from Madrid, Spain comes the scorching glam-punk of The Vivoras, with their US debut single "By Myself" b/w "Wonderbra Bitch". Featuring Norah and Mike from the Pleasure Fuckers on lead guitar/vox and bass respectively. Side A has a harder rockin' sound, like if L7 were less metal and knew how to rock. Side B's ode to the wonders of the Wonderbra reminded me a lot of The Headcoatees, which was kinda strange, but still way cool. Just fuckin' drips in tough chick attitude. Look for their other stuff on Spain's Roto



Records. It might not be easy to find, but it's worth digging up.

From the exotic land of Pittsburgh comes the STEEL MINERS new single "Let's Roll" b/w "What Can You Do". These guys are almost a supergroup, with members of Gumball, Stump Wizards, and The Cynics contained within. Loud, fast, driving punk n roll with the faint aroma of pop hiding in the melodies. Hints of '77 did not go unnoticed. And Don Fleming's production round out a near perfect slab o' punk goodness. After hearing this single and a previous one on Get Hip!, I only hope an album is on the way. Good golly goddamn!!

Also from Spain (do I sense a theme here?) come the first US release from the aptly named VANCOUVERS with "Gotta Shake It" b/w "Transatlantic Friend". Jangly power pop with a definite 60's punk edge to it. The fact that the singer of this band has a throaty voice very reminiscent of Nico doesn't hurt either. Wouldn't be out of place on one of the Nuggets compilations. Would be very interested in getting a hold of their two Spanish elpees on Mojave Records. (Mojave Records PO BOX 50308, 28080 Madrid, Spain)

France has produced many great things over the years. She gave us the works of such greats as Jean-Luc Godard, Francois Truffaut, Albert Camus, Jacques Derrida and Jean Paul Sartre. Now we have a new piece of finery to add to the cabinet- "SQUARIFICATION", the latest slab o' slop from France's garage kings, The Squares. Extremely lo-fi punk, in the style of Wild Billy Childish in his Headcoats mode. A lot like The Beatles if Brian Epstein hadn't taken away their pomeade and their leather jackets. Fans of early Kinks should be quite happy with this one as well. And they aren't at all afraid of driftin' into the Land of Psychedelia, y'know, where Roky Erikson and Sky Saxon have taken up permanent residence. If you ask the kids what they like about this one, they'll just say "the beat, the beat, the beat." And an insidious one it is indeed. VIVE LA FRANCE!!

Ohio's Kings of Cowpunk, THE COWSLINGERS, have a new CD only release that puts all of their eggs in one basket. "FISTFUL OF PESETAS" gathers all of these guys B sides, compilation cuts and exclusive takes (never before on CD) together in one collection for the benefit of those European types who had a great deal of trouble getting a hold of some of these hard to find gems. Also included are four brand new tracks recorded with Eric Ambel at Coyote Studios. Released through the auspices of Spain's ROCK & ROLL, INC. and Get Hip! in the US. Heavy on the Hank Williams covers, which is a good thing. They also tear through Duane Eddy's "MOVIN' & GROOVIN'" and Bo Diddley's "I CAN TELL" and a couple of Link Wray tracks. If you like your punk sort of on the country-ish side, these guys are for you. They have been favorably compared to the late (and need I say, great) Nine Pound Hammer and are one of the best live bands workin' the circuit these days, so dig in meat-and-potatoes fans. (Rock & Roll Inc. PO BOX 57116, 2824 Pozuelo, Madrid, Spain or contact Get Hip!, PO Box 666 Canonsburg, PA 15317)

Here's a hot little number courtesy of Drink N Drive records- a 10 inch multi-band tribute to the inimitable (though many try) Link Wray, "THINK LINK, vol. 2". Featuring the likes of The Galaxy Trio, The Cowslingers, Mono Men, The Volcanos, Thee Headcoat Sect, Forbidden Dimension, Thee Phantom Five and Impala performing some of Link's classic scorchers and cookers. Great compilation. Make sure to send your love offering to the good folks at Drink N Drive. You'll be awfully glad you did. (Drink N Drive

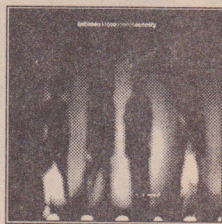
Records, PO BOX 771101 Lakewood, OH 44107)

England's STRIP KINGS are always crowd pleasers in any language. Switchblade carryin' dragstrip punk rock that would just as soon cut you as to look at you. And just when you thought it was safe to walk the streets again, here come two, count 'em, two new 7 inch releases from these Londoners. First up is "Hustler Bullets" b/w "Tempest Buick", released on their own Redline Records and In The Red delivers a one-two punch with "Lightning Breed" b/w "Slow Panic". Both records are an aural kick in the teeth or a punch in the gut, depending on how fast you are. Don't hesitate. Take your medicine like a big kid.

Redline PO BOX 7485 London N19 3HJ England; In The Red Records 2627 E. Strong Pl., Anaheim, CA 92806)

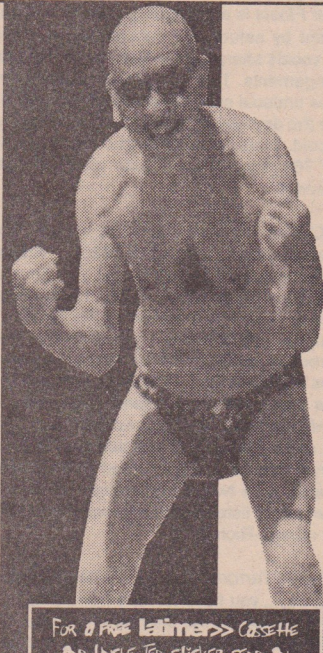
Well, that just about does it. I had a lot more to get to, but space is limited, so act now! By the time you read this, I will have located Mondo A Go Go Internationale to the great state of Texas. That means a new address and here it is now! Send all gifts to David Brock c/o Garage Disease PO Box 924 Bedford, TX 76095. Keep those cards and letters coming! We'll always take handouts, so feel free to send any thing you'd like reviewed. We'll take cassettes, vinyl, plastic or whatever else you can cram some sounds on. And for you technologically advanced types, we have our own web site. Just point your browser thing to http://pages.prodigy.com/garage_disease/crap.htm. And check out our parent company, Schedule One Productions at PO BOX 2771 MTSU Murfreesboro, TN 37130, for the finest in T-shirts, short films and other zine type publications. That really does do it this time. I'm long gone kids!

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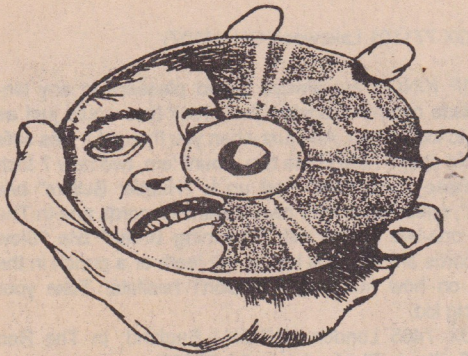


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Record Reviews

THE 4th FLOOR - *We're All Good People* (Paradigm, 67 Irving Place, New York NY 10013) Every town - especially every college town - has at least one hugely popular funk band, the kind that gets everybody sweaty, often with a lot of coarse humor thrown into the act. (Anybody remember Jonny Quest?) That's NYC's 4th Floor in a nutshell and usually I loathe that crap - but I have to admit that these guys pull it off with top-notch musicianship, really catchy tunes, and a sense of humor that's dumb enough for college students but clever enough for, well, me. - Jim T.

20 DEAD FLOWER CHILDREN - "Here I Am" CD-EP (Overture Records, 47551 Iroquois Ct., Novi, MI 48374) Cool name - too bad the music sucked. I was expecting industrial, but it reminded me more of Beastie Boys style rap. No thanks. - Tom B.

764-HERO - *Salt Sinks And Sugar Floats* (Up Records, P.O. Box 21328, Seattle WA 98111) 764-Hero's *Salt Sinks And Sugar Floats* reminds me of an interview with a member of Boston's Cavedogs where, when asked to describe the band's sound, the musician's reply was something along the lines of "we make a lot of noise for three guys." I find that description entirely appropriate to use here because 764-Hero, the duo of John Atkins and Polly Johnson, manage to raise quite a ruckus between the two of them. *Salt Sinks And Sugar Floats* is an intriguing collection of minimalist songs, discordant by nature and cacophonous by design, with Atkins' tortured vocals sharply underlined by the sparseness of the song's arrangements. This kind of thing isn't for everybody - I found that the unusual song structure often bugged the shit out of me, while the depressed delivery of the oblique lyrics left me somewhat cold. If this sounds like your cup o' joe, however, I'd recommend 764-Hero, a band quite unlike any other I've heard. - Reverend K.

88 FINGERS LOUIE - *The Dom Years* (Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 193690, San Francisco CA 94119-3690) Another dose of fast, somewhat goofy power punk that you have come to expect from the guys from Illinois. They rip through eleven tracks, including a scathing rendition of the Beatles' "Help". Anyone familiar with 88 Fingers Louie will love their fairly simple, yet incredibly catchy melodies with choruses that just bury themselves in your brain. They have an edge in the fact they are heavier than most generic punk-pop bands, although they are certainly not doing anything extraordinary. However, they fit the Fat roster perfectly. Their sense of humor comes through on songs like "In the John" and "Intellectual Lover", which also happen to be two of the stronger tracks musically. This will be mandatory listening for dedicated fans and a cool introduction for others. - Rich Q.

ACIDBATH - *Pagan Terrorist Tactics* (Rotten Records, POB 2157, Montclair CA 91763) Oh, boy....you have no idea how badly I wanted to just write 'Shit Sandwich' and move on. In the interest of fairness, though, I thought I'd try and be at least somewhat objective. So, here we go: Metal. Standard fare musically. Vocally, the singer can't decide whether to sound like that guy from Alice In Chains, that guy from Helmet, or that guy from Napalm Death. Lyrically? How about "I smear my wet semen on the walls of my oppression"? The scariest thing is that these guys do their shtick with no signs of irony visible. Simply put, this is ridiculously run-of-the-mill late 80's metal/thrash (with updated vocals for the 90s) that sucks shit in earnest. - Mike F.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL (Mutant Pop, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis OR 97330) Do you like Screeching Weasel and the Queers? Good, so does this catchy California trio whose lead singer sounds like he's about 15. That

beaming boyish charm coupled with innocent lyrics about schoolyard angst and schoolboy crushes will tickle your ears, lighten your heart, and perk you up faster than a B12 shot. - Jim T.

ALBERT HILL - *Albert Hill EP* (Fuse Records/Universal) There's virtually no place in this high-tech, wired-and-ready world that you can go to get away from rock & roll. With satellite dishes sucking MTV right out of the air and Wal Mart selling CDs in every little backwater town, it doesn't matter where you live, you've heard of Madonna, Pearl Jam and Lollapalooza. Which goes a long way, perhaps, towards explaining the glut of bands currently cresting the horizon. Even places like South Carolina, where the band Albert Hill hails from, are spawning a music scene. Unfortunately, learning to play an instrument competently and being able to create an original and unique sound are two entirely different things. It's not that Albert Hill are bad - this self-titled five song EP has its moments - it's just that their sound isn't very, ah....distinctive. They may have aspirations towards



ANTHROPHOBIA

the big time, but Albert Hill merely come across as Hootie & The Blowfish hopped up on adrenaline and steroids. - Reverend K.

ANATHEMA - *Eternity* (Fierce Recordings, 285 W. Broadway, New York, NY, 10013). I believe this is the group's second album. It's very melodic. Their lyrics are excellent, very deep poetry. All the songs are basically gothic, with occasional changes, like up-tempo beats. Overall, it's a good album, if you like the mellow stuff. - Phil P.

ANTHROPHOBIA - *Pulse* (Oxygen Records, P.O. Box 6700, FDR Station NYC 10150). This is the band's sophomore effort for this label (following their "Wreckage" EP), and I found it quite an improvement. The production is better and the band itself sounds tighter. If you're into early QUICKSAND material, you'll like this album. They have their share of similarities. - Phil P.

ANTI-FLAG - *Die for the Government* (New Red Archives P.O.Box 210501 San Francisco Ca. 94121) Anti-Flag has always been one of those bands that I had heard of, heard great things about, but never had an opportunity to check out. This disc lives up to everything I heard about them. The Pittsburgh-based trio blasts through seventeen sonic blasts of punk fury, upbeat and bouncy without ever becoming poppy. The band plays with relentless intensity and a truckload of snotty attitude. Their sound can range from nearly silly Queens-like stuff to snarling, politically-fueled venom reminiscent of early Dead Kennedys. The musicianship here is superb and the sound is both raw and big. I played this thing three times through before I could even think of taking it out of my stereo. Just amazing. This is a must. - Rich Q.

THE BACKSLIDERS - *Throwin' Rocks at the Moon* (Atlantic) - Imagine yourself in a greasy, dusty backwoods bar in Small Town, America. The drinks are stiff, the locals are ugly, maybe Jodie Foster's getting raped on the pinball machine in the back room. Look to the stage and you'll see The Backsliders taking charge, maybe whippin' up a bit of a storm on the wooden dancefloor. The Backsliders aren't all too pretty themselves, but their music is. "Lonesome Teardrops," with its honey-sweet vocals and pedal-steel guitar riffs sounds straight off of AM radio circa 1949, and "Crazy Train" is a sure-as-shit tearjerker that'll make you put down your beer and pause for thought. These guys are writing real music that The Mavericks and Shenandoah only wish they could get away with. The fact of the matter is that not too many authentic country acts are getting signed to the majors these days; take a chance when The Backsliders come through your town and check them out - you might be surprised. - Dan E.

BIS - *This Is Teen-C Power!* (Grand Royal) Three Limey teens doing a low-fi riot- grrl meets giddy new-wave kind of thing. Also Bis' sound is cobbled together from readily identifiable parts, "Teen-C" is already being hailed as a new movement in England, where The Next Big Thing comes around about every two weeks. But while there's nothing here particularly new or ground-shaking, I can see why they're already huge in England. This stuff is as addictive and heroin-laced taffy, and every bit as sweet and yummy. - Jim T.

BLITZ BABIEZ - *Thought Spawn* (Onefoot PO Box 3834 Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-0592) This is the Australian version of Mary's Danish. Lead vocalist Joanne has no problem keeping up with the energy of each song. Although all 14 songs were excellent, "Trigger Slip" was the best. You can't go wrong with this one if you're into good alternative rock with female vocals - Den S.

BLOODHOUND GANG - *One Fierce Beer Coaster* (Geffen) A bunch of goofy sounding songs with goofy lyrics. The Bloodhound Gang just might be Weird Al Yankovic's unruly kids. "Fire Water Burn" is the one that gets air play every 15 seconds on the radio around here. Most of the songs have that rap/heavy metal sound. Lots of samples too. As annoying as this record was, the song "Tricky" wasn't that bad. According to singer Jim Pop, it's a Run-DMC remake done Slayer style. - Den S.

BLUE MEANIES - *Pave the World* (Thick Records, 916 N. Damen, Chicago, IL 60622) One of the coolest, most off-the-wall bands ever to arise in Illinois is back with a 6 song 10" picture disc. These wackos blend jazz, funk, and just about everything else but the kitchen sink, providing nothing short of a masterpiece. Of special note are "Smoother Me" for its incredible, rapid-fire precision, and a live version of "Ace of Spades," complete with a horn section. Highly recommended. - Paul S.

BOXING GANDHIS - *Howard* (Atlantic) Oh, man. Give the sassy emo boy a funk record. I have very little background in funk stuff (listening to P-Funk in my pal Terry's car, mostly), so bear with me here. Ready? Good vocals and harmonies that sound like the Chili Peppers on their best days. The music is, well.....you know. Funky. Makes you wanna shake yr ass (probably not as much as it makes you wanna shake my damn neck for writing a review of a CD like this. I'm sorry. I have no idea). This would probably sound good in Terry's car. - Mike F.

BREAKDOWN - *Blacklisted* (Eye Ball Records Po Box 1653 Peter Stuyvesant Station New York New York 10009) This disc starts and ends with great songs. Nearly all of the tracks feature strong guitar hooks and passionate vocals. However, Breakdown has a nasty habit of falling into metal traps. This diminishes some of the mood that they are trying to establish on songs like "(I Wanna See a) Street Fight" and "Jail of Depression". These songs end up sounding cliched and forced. On the positive side, the band displays great promise on the title track and "Don't Give Up", both songs destined to inspire furious sing-alongs with their mix of high energy hardcore and impressive harmony. If Breakdown can harness a heavy sound without sounding like an 80's metal tribute outfit, they'll be fine. - Rich Q.



BREED 13

BREED 13 - *A Reason To Hit Kevin* (Opulence, PO Box 2071, Wilmington NC 28402) When I first discovered this band on a demo tape a few years ago, they were a four-piece specializing in shimmering dream pop. A lot has changed since then; Breed 13 is a trio these days, and while Brad Rice's vocals can still capture that wafting angelic quality of old, these guys also sound like they've been overdosing on steroids and adrenalin. Tracks like "Champion Of The World" and "I Wish I Could Remember," with their breakneck tempos, hysterical vocals, and throttling guitars, grab you by the throat and slap you around a few times before tossing you to the floor begging for more. - Jim T.

BUFFALO DAUGHTER - *Captain Vapour Athletes* (Grand Royal) Yet another Japanese trio enthralled with the glittery, hodgepodge soup can that is American culture. It's so refreshing to get a view of the world [and especially this country] through the eyes of foreign youth. Buffalo Daughter meld surf tunes, B-boy style rap, and a bit of the standard radio 'alternative,' until it's wholly unrecognizable. Most of the Japanese bands that are breaking into new American indie labels have one distinctive characteristic that groups them together: everything they do is stamped with a capital FUN!!! Campy and as mixed up as a 'crip' in Tokyo, Buffalo Daughter jam on every style of rock there is. . . all at once. The last track on the CD, however, is a very special treat all its own. "Vapour Action Forever" is a cosmic candy parade of in-ow-too injected, keyboard salvation that makes you scream ecstatically, without a body. A keeper. -Greg M.

BUILT TO SPILL - *Perfect From Now On* (Warner Bros.) *Perfect From Now On*, BTS's major label debut, is just as genius as their previous efforts. Trademark quirky melodic guitars and cleverly peculiar heartfelt lyrics, with Doug's high pitched earnest croon. These aren't three minute pop songs, most of them clock in at around seven or so minutes long, but believe me, by the time a song is over you'll be wishing it wasn't. Beautiful songs that melt your heart over and over again. - Rick K.

R.L. BURNSIDE - *A Ass Pocket Of Whiskey* (Matador) From Casa de Matador comes the new slab o' wax from Mississippi blues stomper RL BURNSIDE. This is the real deal- greasy electric Delta blooze, just drippin' in it! Recorded on the afternoon of 2-6-96 in Holly Springs, Mississippi and backed by none other than the BLUES EXPLOSION. This thang'll kick you in yer ass and leave ya hoppin' mad. Motherfuckin' chaos on wheels!! And check out RL's other shit while you're at it. He's got some stuff out on Fat Possum Records that is amazing. - David B.

BUSKER SOUNDCHECK - "Wesley Lee Roth" CD EP (Fullgroan Records, PO Box 577190, Chicago IL 60657) This hard-working Chitown trio has been at it for a while now, as this latest dollop of their clever, candy-coated power-pop shows. "It's 3" is an exultant hurrah at the temperature (3 degrees is warm when you're used to Chicago weather) while "Cyberhigh" is a giddy, uptempo salute to multi-media PC'ing. Both songs have a big boomy sound set to bouncy punk tempos - Cheap Trick colliding with Jawbreaker in Husker Du's old tour van. Finally, "Wesley Willis" is a sweet-natured tribute to the street musician whose picnic hamper is a few coldcuts short of a full sandwich. - Jim T.

C.R. - *The John Lisa LP* (VinylLP) (Reservoir, PO Box 790366 Middle Village New York 11379-0012) This is almost unreal. C.R. delivers fast, inspired and bravely opinionated hardcore played with sheer flesh-ripping speed and intensity. The band sounds like they are trying to bury themselves within their minute-long explosions, and they are taking you down with them. The songs rage against ignorance, conformity and the pressures placed on us in our daily existence by a society obsessed with wealth, power and appearance. Intelligent lyrics, powerful messages and a burning desire to be heard and taken seriously makes this a true hardcore record. You need this. - Rich Q.

CASH MONEY - *Black Hearts And Broken Wills* (Touch & Go) Low-fi raunch 'n roll from a Chitown duo (guitar and drums) with a bit of country stomp and a lot of that ol' Touch & Go testosterone. Sinewy and mean as a rattlesnake. - Jim T.

CHASM - *Gye Nyame* (Boot To Head, Box 9005 Portland, Oregon 97207) Q: What's more ridiculous than Krishna core? A: Christian crusty punk. This is surprisingly well played aggressive hardcore. But what's with the spiky Mohawk guy screaming lyrics about Jesus and pro-life anthems? This is the squatters equivalent of Stryper. I remember a time when punk rock was about rebellion, not religion. These kids need a good bare-bottomed spanking from their local pastor. - TMF.

CHOPPER (Big Deal, PO Box Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009-9998) Late 70's powerpop is alive and well on this CD. Chopper have great harmonies and jangly guitars of bands like the Posies and the dB's, also at times have the melodic buzzsaw guitar of Husker Du. If you've been looking for some good pop with a nice kick, Chopper should do the trick. - Rick K.

CIBO MATTO - "Super Relax" EP (Warner Bros.) The cuddly Japanese Downtown NYC divas of cartoony funk-pop are back with a new ep out some new songs and four different remixes of "Sugar Water" originally off their debut *Viva! La Woman*, with some help from Mike D. and Russell Simins. *Super Relax* is great for just loungin to, or the background soundtrack for any party. - Rick K.

CLAIRMEL - *Part Dipshit* (No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604-4636) This reminds me an awful lot of old-school hardcore bands of the post-punk era, such as M.I.A. and the Brigade (formerly and currently the Youth Brigade). Slightly emo-ish, very melodic, but still with an angry, youthful edge. - Paul S.

CLARA VENUS (105 Ave. B #5B, New York NY 10009) NYC's Clara Venus mix elements of grunge, industrial, and goth into a thick, roiling sonic stew, heavy on the atmospheric vocals. A feast for lovers of noisy, swirling, dissonant guitar spew. Play loud - and hope the goofy outfits they're wearing on the CD sleeve are just a phase. - Jim T.

CLAWHAMMER - *Hold Your Tongue (and Say Apple)* (Interscope) Good ol' fashioned rock and roll in a Rolling Stones kind of vein. Snotty and raw, with truly unique and interesting vocals that remind one of a manic Mick Jagger. "Water" is a cool, intense, bluesy kind of song. "Caravan" is the great jazz standard done in a quirky rock version. - Paul S.

CLEANSER - *Grime* (None of the Above Records Po Box 654 Farmingdale New York 11738) This band had two of the cooler tracks on NOTA's 516 compilation. Now they're back with a full length release of they're own and it's worth having. Cleanser plays extremely heavy and interesting hardcore. Unique vocals combine with excellent guitar playing that are supported by a steady and talented rhythm section. "Grime" is a collection of multi-layered and diverse hardcore that blends power with time change. The songs vary in delivery and grant each member an opportunity to display their individual talent. Full of attitude and ability, Cleanser has created a great example of 90's hardcore. They are a band that instead of imitating and attempting to capture the sound of years past, is creating a new feel of their own. - Rich Q.

THE COGS - *Macho* (Bear Records, 295 Greenwich Street #105, New York, NY 10007) Really nice, pleasant sorta lo-fi pop. Very unassuming.

This too short 6 song EP ranges from fast, jumpy pop, to beautiful ballad and back again. "No Sign of Pinkas" is kinda country-ish in feel, and is probably the only weak track, in my opinion. The final track, "Pelican Bay," is a fun sing-along sort of thing. - Paul S.

COLD CRANK - *Kung Pao Kitty* (Blue Lamp Records, P.O. Box 4908, Seattle, WA, 98104) The Ramones of the 90's! Cold Crank is absolutely amusing. Seriousness is not an issue here. Cold Crank could work the punk, hard rock, alternative, and avant garde audiences. The vocals are in-yer-face, but not down your throat. The attitude is to have fun with the above genres without actually being part of them. Cold Crank is a great diversion, entertaining and high spirited. - Michael C.

GERALD COLLIER - *I Had To Laugh Like Hell* (C/Z Records) Kurt Cobain came back from hell and recruited John Mellancamp's band members to produce this soulful, melodic release full of angst and anguish and lyrics such as "I'm all fucked up." And I listened to it 5 times all the way through and that's all I can think of to say about it. - Rodney L.

COOL CHAMBER (Roadrunner Records) Sort of like that metallic industrial music, but slower, not as heavy, and with little originality. And the final track of studio out-takes just proves what doofuses these guys must be. - Paul S.

CORDS - *Hear! See! Feel! Taste!* (Emperor Norton Records 163 Third Ave Suite 465 New York, N.Y. 10003) Waaay fun and cute indie rawk/punk band. The girl singer has a sweet voice that fits their sometimes angry, sometimes innocent pop songs. Some of the songs at the end of the record sound like an odd, experimental free-for-all which just adds to their flavor. Personally, I think they deserve a handful of kandy! - Eva S.

THE COWSLINGERS - *Fistful Of Pesetas* (Get Hip! PO BOX 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) Ohio's Kings of Cowpunk's new CD only release that puts all of their eggs in one basket. "FISTFUL OF PESETAS" gathers all of these guys B sides, compilation cuts and exclusive takes (never before on CD) together in one collection for the benefit of those European types who had a great deal of trouble getting a hold of some of these hard to find gems. Also included are four brand new tracks recorded with Eric Ambel at Coyote Studios. Released through the auspices of Spain's ROCK & ROLL, INC. and Get Hip! in the US. Heavy on the Hank Williams covers, which is a good thing. They also tear through Duane Eddy's "MOVIN' & GROOVIN'" and Bo Diddley's "I CAN TELL" and a couple of Link Wray tracks. If you like your punk on the country-ish side, these guys are for you. They have been favorably compared to the late (and need I say, great) Nine Pound Hammer, so dig in meat-and-potatoes fans. - David B.

CRADLE OF FILTH - *Dusk And Her Embrace* (Pierce Recordings, 285 W. Broadway, New York, NY 10013). Pure Black Metal and gothic keyboards combined together creating an explosion of twisted melodies. Very evil, dark, but at the same time, melodic. It's kind of hard to describe the style of this record, it combines too many different elements. Put it this way, you just have to hear it for yourself to experience the brutality. - Phil P.

CRASS - *Christ The Bootleg* (Allied Records, POB 460683, SF, CA, 94146-0683) Recorded live during a 1984 show, this band, for those of you who aren't old timers, were amongst the original torchbearers of the UK anarchist punks, and this release is essential to those of you who care about the history of punk. Crass was always political and rallying against the system - but with sincerity. A proud addition to my collection. - Tom B.

THE CRETINS - *I Feel Better Already* (Melted Records, 21-41 34th Ave., Suite 10A, Astoria, NY 11106) 10 tracks in 20 minutes, and only the last track sucked, but the band blames alcohol on that one. Features an ex-guitarist and one of the roadies from the Queens. Sugary lyrics and singalong anthems surround songs about girl troubles. This Massachusetts group reminded me of the Fiendz. A lot of fun and too short to criticize. - Tom B.

THE CROWD - *Letter Bomb* (Flipside Records POB 60790 Pasadena CA 91116) The Crowd borders old school punk with a poppy attitude. This is the kind of music that makes you want to jump up and down in yr own bedroom! It comes complete with a Buzzcocks' cover and a subliminal Sex Pistols' riff. You must buy this CD! - Eva S.

CRUMBOX - *Resident Double U* (Time Bomb Recordings, 219 Broadway, Suite 519, Laguna Beach, CA 92651) Alterna-power-pop. Plenty of jangly melody, powerful vocals, lots of loud guitars. Not groundbreaking or unique, but highly listenable. - Paul S.

THE CRUMBS (Lookout) What with the punk thing being in full swing these days, I didn't expect this to have the impact that it had on me, but I have to admit that it hit me just the right way. I hear a strong Black Market Baby and early Rancid influence here. The Crumbs play rockin, black leather jacket-



L.E.S. STITCHES

early Rancid influence here. The Crumbs play rockin, black leather jacket-styled punk with an emphasis on the punk (as opposed to the rock thing). Apparently from the same school as the Rip Offs, TeenGenerate and maybe even the Makers, the Crumbs often delve deeper into the 60's garage scene, and the singer's slight Spanish accent adds a real cool twist. It's a fairly accessible blend that had me spinning this disk at least 12 times so far. I'd love to hear more. - John L.

CUSTOM - (Lifestyle Records, 3-712 Robson St., Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6Z 1A2) If this is heavy metal, then heavy metal hasn't sounded this interesting in years. The strength of the voice and the crunch of the guitars place it in metal, but it is metal that revels in experimentation. That willingness to experiment gives Custom a freshness that separates them from a lot of their cheesy predecessors. That is not to say that every experiment on this record works (i.e. "Product" wasn't thrilling), but when it works it works well (i.e. "IF-Pick" grabbed me right off the bat). Anyone that's in the mood for metal that's out of character should pick this one up. - Michael C.

DAMNATION - *Misericordia* (Jade Tree, 3210 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810) Better than average modern-day hardcore (read: straight-edge style hardcore). Somewhat metal-influenced, very heavy, but pretty straightforward, musically. Lyrics are pretty typical for hardcore music, including a song about addiction. - Paul S.

DANCE HALL CRASHERS - *The Old Record (1989-1992)* (Honest Don's P.O. Box 192027 San Francisco, Ca 94119-2027) I've only seen the Dance Hall Crashers one time, but it was a rather pleasant experience as the mood was good while the crowd danced up a storm. DHC have lots more in common with straightforward ska, rather than the punk/ska hybrid found in Operation Ivy and bits and pieces of Rancid. On this 'Old record', the performance is still damn near perfect as the production is flawless. For those new to this scene, imagine if the Andrew Sisters sang for a ska band. Great musicianship and songwriting ability here too. You catch this crew giggling around almost all the time. Cool. - John L.

DASH RIP ROCK - *Dash Rip Rock's Gold Record* (Ichiban, Box 724677, Atlanta, GA 31139) - These swamp rats from Atlanta draw on influences as varied as Louisiana Zydeco and mid-century gospel, but seem happiest spicing up their favorites with a healthy dose of brutal southern rock. Their ambitions certainly aren't too high: "Be careful what you ask for, cause it just might come true/I wanna be locked inside a liquor store with you." However, their inspired cover of CCR's "Born on the Bayou" and their punk-rock rendition of "Jambalaya" would make near anyone a believer.

Once they move into their own material, though, the levels get toned down considerably. I found myself skipping past hokey bar songs like "Pussywhipped" and playing remakes like Hanks Williams' "I Saw the Light" instead. A fun cover band, yes. A gold record, no. - Dan E.

DAY ONE - *Figurehead* (Broken Records 305 S. Westmore Ave Lombard IL 60148) Way laid back post punk low on the energy level, but with a few decent hooks and a sound that hasn't been around since the Replacements were on their way out. I was really impressed with the art and layout, but unfortunately the music fell short of holding my attention somewhere mid disk. Beavis and Buttthead would probably say that this band just doesn't try very hard and I can't help but wonder if these guys are aware that there is a much more prominent Broken Records in California. Maybe its indicative of how much they've been disconnected with the punk scene as of late. A decent effort, but it really requires patience. - John L.

DEAD AND GONE - *God Loves Everyone But You* (Alternative Tentacles) This is the second release from these guys and I'm heading out to buy the first one! What a great CD. This band is hard to classify. Dark, fast paced rage is the best I can do. The vocals reminded me of Rollins on Black Flag's *My War*. Best songs are Blackout, Violets, and North of the Unlocked Scar. Unlocked Scar makes me think that the lead singer has been on the receiving end of one too many headbutts. As much as I liked this CD, they could have done without the 7 minutes of UFO-sounding instrumental distortion at the end of the disc. If you're looking for something different and good, buy this disc. - Den S.

DEADGUY - *Screaming with the Deadguy Quintet* (Victory Records, Po Box 146546, Chicago, IL 60614) Deadguy has produced consistently bizarre, dangerously intense music, and their first release on Victory is no different. This is the sound of evil captured on tape. The band is relentlessly heavy, and do not let up at any time during the disc. True fans may be a little disappointed that this is only a five song release, with four of them clocking in at under three minutes, but this would be a perfect introduction for the uninitiated. "Screamin'" is just five blasts of tortured vocals, swirling guitar and a pummeling rhythm section. I liked this more with each listen. Every song is a keeper, but "(Escape from) the Fake Clink" and "Free Moustache Rides" were just amazing. Get this. -Rich Q.

DESPAIR - *As We Bleed* (Initial Records, PO Box 251145, West Bloomfield, MI 48325) Heavy, crunchy hardcore in the straight-edge vein. In other words, there's not a whole lot of melody, but there's plenty of energy. Shouted, gruff vocals are heard over lots of loud, heavy power chords. The tempo on the first cut, "The Deed is Done," was a little too slow, and the

song seemed to drag just a bit. But each song afterwards cranked the energy level up an extra notch. The best tracks on this 5 song CD-EP, in my opinion, had to be the 3rd and 5th tracks, "Fade to Numb" and "In Disgust," for their up-tempo intensity. Though there are plenty of boring, crappy hardcore bands out there, with good stuff like this, hardcore will never die. - Paul S.

DEUS - *In a Bar, Under the Sea* (Island Records) Yet another wonder from **DEUS**. This band combines the machine gun precision, dry wit, and quirkiness of Zappa, the smooth coolness of Girls Against Boys, and the genre bending of Ween. This release exudes freshness and uniqueness. Styles jump around from standard, twangy pop to cool jazz to the sounds of a James Bond movie theme and on. Highly recommended. - Paul S.

DICK ARMY - *Helmet Party* (Padded Cell Records, PO Box 4710 Arlington, VA 22204) - Completely insane drunk rock and roll. These guys are rude, obnoxious, and so disgusting, you gotta love it. Everything from Ramones riffs to 80's cheese metal screams. Ahhh. - Dave T.

DIE MY WILL (Drawn & Quartered 20 Newell Ave. Bristol CT 06010) Ugh.. Maybe it is just my distaste for hardcore bullshit, but this angry cock rock i.e Type O Negative band didn't suit me well. (Why do I feel like there is going to be a hitman sent my way... Maybe it's the music.) - Eva S.

DISCIPULOS De DIONISOS - *Adictos Al Pomo Guarro* (No Tomorrow Records Apdo 1134 12080 Castellon Spain) This disc gives you eighteen really fast, really great guitar driven tracks in just over thirty minutes, including one track dedicated to GG Allin, and another written about Ron Jeremy. The playing here is inspired, loose and full of energy. The production is great, and the singer's voice is nearly hypnotic. I loved this. Oh, did I mention it's entirely in Spanish? Yeah, roaring out of Spain, the Discipulos de Dionisos crank out punk that would make any Screeching Weasel fan drool. Unfortunately, this disc will also make you wish you paid more attention in Spanish class back in high school. Anyway, from what I could figure out, these guys are infatuated with American punk rock and pornography, so you cannot go wrong. There are even cover versions of the Angry Samoan's "My Old Man's A Fatso" and "Horror Hotel" by the Misfits, both sung in English for some reason. I guess some things just do not translate well. Regardless of the language barrier, this is one the best records I've heard in along time. Muy bien amigos! - Rich Q.

DOCTOR HADLEY - *Mondo Bizarro* (BuzzChunk, PO Box 188, Mt Pocono PA 18344) File under "Can't judge a book by its cover." I was all ready to dismiss this as typical Poconos bar-band slop, and some of it veers in that direction - but the sheer inventiveness of the arrangements, musicianship, and production - innumerable twists and turns and unexpected spurts of sound & rhythm - hooked me. They gotta do something about those haircuts, though. - Jim T.

DOOMBUGGY (Mary's Lounge, PO Box 1462, Buffalo NY 14213) Catchy, uptempo rock'n'roll with a bit of a Sixties garage feel, enhanced by Doombuggy's two secret weapons. First, singer Clarke "Shaggy" Faust used to front one of my favorite bands, the lovably slapdash Splatcats, and he's still belting out tunes with the same raffish charm & energy. Secondly, these guys know how to write hooks and come up with some really cool lyrics, like the tune about getting dissed on the Internet or . Lots of fun. - Jim T.

DOTS WILL ECHO - *"Get Your Hands Off My Modern You Weasel"* (Zero Music Corp, P.O. Box 22, Glen Rock NJ 07452) There must be some sort of chemical catalyst in the state's waterway, or perhaps an errant mutant gene that predisposes New Jersey, alone among the 48 states of the continental U.S., to belch forth so many rock & roll bands. Thankfully, most of them have more than a fair share of talent, and Dots Will Echo is no exception. *Get Your Hands Off My Modern, You Weasel* is a sturdy collection of tunes, showing just a glimmer of Brit-pop and an echo of folk-rock influence. Never allowing the listener a dull moment, Dots Will Echo mix it up musically, from the harmonies of "I Feel Fine" to the dreamlike strains of "Each Night" or the goofy popish "T-E-L-E-Vision." Although the experimental monkey-business of spreading one song across almost 90 tracks on the CD was somewhat irritating, overall this offering from Dots Will Echo is a fine effort, an entertaining collection of highly original rock & roll. - Reverend K.

DRAIN S.T.H. - *Horror Wrestling* (The Enclave, 936 Broadway, NYC 10010). The best way to describe this is as the female version of ALICE IN CHAINS. The guitars sound like a lot of the work from AIC's *Dirt* album, and these girls also have the double vocals. It's a decent album, and the production isn't bad either. The lyrics are very good, and they surprised me, 'cause they aren't the kind of lyrics most girl bands use. - Phil P.

THE EAST VILLAGE (East Village Records, 110 Greene St. Suite 800, New York, NY, 10012) You'd be checking your watch a lot if you went to a club to see another band and had to sit through these guys. Too abrasive to be college rock and too pretentious to be anything else, The East Village isn't so much a band as much as it is an exercise in futility. If ears could vomit, I'd need a new set of headphones. - Michael C.

EMILY'S PORCH - *Pioneering the Dead Scene* (Opulence, PO Box 2071, Wilmington, NC 28402-2071) Sonic Youth-like guitar dissonance, but in more of a pop vein. But the band is sloppy, so the dissonance doesn't always work. And the vocals are so sloppy and out of tune as to be practically unlistenable. There's absolutely no energy or enthusiasm in this release. - Paul S.

ENGINE 88 - *Snowman* (Caroline) I caught Engine 88 opening for Jawbox a few months back and left with no real opinion on their stuff, be it pro or con. That's the thing, it seems....a cursory listen to "Snowman" won't do a whole lot for you. Musically, the band is often just a cut or two above yr average indie rock quartet. You really have to sit down with this record and read along to absorb it. The wacko humor and unlikely scenarios the band articulates (with a voice similar to that of the singer of the Buzzcocks, I think, which is never a bad thing) are the hook that will grab you after a while. That said, there are some amazingly dynamic and visceral songs to be found here, such as the title track, which yanked me into better posture with one listen alone. - Mike F.

EXCESSIVE FORCE - *In Your Blood* (Life Sentence Records, PO Box 5856, Aurora, IL 60507) Lyrically, this is very negative, with sentiments full of anger, hatred, and revenge. Musically, it's pretty typical of modern-day straight-edge style hardcore. Lots of repetitive power chords, extra crunchy-style, with gruffly shouted vocals. Not one of the better examples of the genre. - Paul S.

FIFTEEN - *There's No Place Like Home* (Good Night) (Lookout) This is Fifteen's final release. Wow. What a way to go out. They've started out on Lookout and that's where they've finished off. I guess that they could have gotten a lot farther if it wasn't for all the drug and alcohol abuse. Still, there's something about Jeff Ott's voice that will trigger off memories for years to come. He was the personality that I loved to hate in Crimpshrine but eventually won me over. He treated me like dirt both times I met him but I forgive him. - John L.

FIVE RING CIRCUS (Flip Records, 433 W. Broadway, NYC 10012) - Five Ring

Circus is sort of a multi-media cultural cooperative put together by Clutch Productions, an organization based in Athens, Georgia whose main concerns are promoting both the modern and folk arts in their community. The main emphasis here is obviously the music; small reproductions of paintings and photographs are printed throughout the album's liner notes, but are far too small to be fully appreciated. Musically, old favorites like Syd Straw, Jack Logan, and Man or Astroman? sound great, although if you already have their albums, you already have the songs. REM's live version of "South Central Rain" is of course amazing, and it probably isn't a mistake that the bands most obviously attempting to carry on the southern art rock tradition that put Athens on the musical map come across as sounding the most sincere. Check out bands like Redneck Greece, Athens Grass, and The Star Room Boys to get a taste of the southern talent that's still sprouting in Georgia. Also included are tracks by The Woggles, Love Tractor, Magnapop, and Kathleen Parish. - Dan E.

FOCAL POINT - *Suffering of the Masses* (Tooth and Nail Records, PO Box 12698, Seattle, WA 98111-4698) Musically, this is classic-style metallic hardcore. Big power chords, crunchy bass, and vocals that are more growled than sung or even shouted are present. Then there's the typical hard-line straight-edge sort of lyrics about abortion, failed friendships, and so on. If you're into straight-edge hardcore, you'll probably like this a lot. If you're not so crazy about right-wing conservative lyrics, you'll probably be offended by the lyrics here. - Paul S.

FROGPOND - *Count to Ten* (TriStar Music) Nice alterna-pop. Smooth female vocals over somewhat grunge-tinged pop music. This is definitely not your light, airy nice-girl pop. This has a loud, tough guitar sound. There's plenty of hooks and plenty of fast, punky tunes, and the interesting vox-guitar juxtaposition makes this an interesting, enjoyable album. - Paul S.

FUNERAL ORATION - *Believer* (Hopeless Records, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, Ca. 91409-7495) This Holland-based quartet plays basic, energetic punk with a great sense of harmony. Singer Peter Zirschky's vocals are thick and delivered with intensity without sounding snarled or forced. There are a few highlights to this disc. One of which is the production, for its

professional but not too slick, sound gives the listener some guess at what this band must be like live. Another characteristic of this band that will separate them from most is the intelligence and honesty of their lyrics. Instead of the generic self-loathing or finger pointing that so many bands do, Funeral Oration write songs about getting older, recognizing mistakes and facing up to one's own life. The ideas of self-discovery and understanding are particularly true on songs like "More than Anything", "Will I Ever Tell You", "Forever For Good", and "We Had Everything". After a moderately slow start, this record turns into an impressive collection of songs that feature a refreshing point of view. - Rich Q.

FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON - *Dead Cities* (EBV, PO Box 1871, London, w10 5ZL, England) Incredible. How does one even begin to classify this into a genre? This ranges from dark ambient to trip-hop rhythms to hard industrial and everywhere and nowhere in between. Lush electronics, guitars, and rhythms transport the listener into a different world. But what mysterious world? Listen to this in a dark room with your eyes closed. And be sure not to just listen to this, but to experience this. Highly recommended. - Paul S.

FUZZ BELOVED (1743 Camino Lindo, South Pasadena, CA 91030) A sticker on this CD's jewel box claims this is "heavy psychedelic," but it's nothing more than dull, wanky, rock music. There's little energy or enthusiasm evident from the band. Skip this unless you're insomniac. - Paul S.

THE GAIN - *Sing Ready Steady Smash* (Mighty Recording Co. PO Box 1833 Los Angeles Ca. 90078) The Gain are a band that falls somewhere between 90's bouncy garage punk and late 70's power pop. Very simple direct guitar riffs carry each song while the band plays with varying degrees of intensity. When they sound angry, the songs can be three minute blasts of inspiration, particularly the title track and "Told You So". However, most of the material here is easily forgettable with bland lyrics and musicianship. The Gain constantly make efforts to embellish their songs with catchy hooks and melodies, but they usually sound flat. There are a few songs here that have promise, but the album on a whole just sounds dated and listless. - Rich Q.

GEEZER LAKE - *King Frost Parade* (Thick Records, 916 N Damen Chicago IL 60622) Gezeer Lake are in a league of their own especially being from Indie-Rock Land aka Chapel Hill. Gezeer Lake create surreal noise-pop landscapes, along with jazzy horns and other strange effects

thrown in. This by no means is a CD you can just put on and tap your foot to, there's a lot going on here, which of course makes it an interesting listen. The band is able to make unconventional pop without it meandering into oblivion. - Rick K.

GENERIC JOE (SRC Music, box 14, Ramsey, NJ 07446) Good straight forward contemporary rock from this trio out of northern New Jersey. Plain ol' rock with two or three ballads thrown in. These guys stick to their contemporary guns and I give them credit for not doing the "popular" thing and trying to fit into the alternative rock category. - Den S.

GIFTBOX! - *Last Night I Dreamed of Gary, Indiana* (Brinkman Records, PO Box 441837, Somerville, MA 02144) Super lo-fi recording of super-minimalist music. While most of the tracks are simple voice and guitar, there's a definite honesty and passion evident. A cool 10" that really grew on me. - Paul S.

GIGOLO AUNTS - "Learn To Play Guitar" EP (Wicked Disc, 38 Everett St., Allston MA 02134) Fresh from their disastrous dalliance with RCA, the Gigolo Aunts regroup and come right back with six stunning power-pop tunes on an indie label. Inspirational title: "The Sun Will Rise Again." Nice to have you back, boys. - Jim T.

THE GITS - *Kings and Queens* (Broken Rekids) A collection of 16 2-track recordings made back in 1987. Stands on the border between punk, post-punk, and garage. Individual songs are not too bad, but overall, this was too long of a CD. Things started to all sound the same, which makes the whole thing start to drag. I think it had something to do with the vocals, which were lower register female vocals. There was a kind of quality to the vocals that just started to grate on me after awhile. Great in small doses, fatal if you overdose. - Paul S.

GOTOHELLS - *Six Packs And Racetracks* (Stiffpole, PO Box 20721, St. Petersburg FL 33742) Gutbucket rawk 'n' roll about fast cars and faster wimmen. Makes me wish I was born a redneck. Play loud. And often. - Jim T.

GOUDS THUMB (Critique Records, 50 Cross Street, Winchester, Ma. 01890) The story behind this band's name is far more interesting than the music they produce. Gouds Thumb, named for a friend of the band who cut him thumb off in some sort of bizarre woodshop accident, play very run of the mill, generic, plodding college rock, that is definitely trying to fit in with



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that "alternative" thing that all the kids seem to be talking about. This would have been sort of interesting maybe five or six years ago, but now just seems stale. The guitar playing strains to move the songs along, and somewhat melancholy, moody vocals hang in the air, but do not impress. However, with that said, they will probably explode onto the scene thanks to some modern rock station. - Rich Q.

ALAN GRANDY - *acrown'stars* (Sound of the Sea, PO Box 18078, Cleveland OH 44118) Whether he's accompanying himself on acoustic guitar or singing behind lush orchestrations, singer-songwriter Alan Grandy's bittersweet vocals will mellow your world better than a cup of those imported flavored coffees they sell on TV. A lovely collection of adult pop and folk tunes perfect for a quiet romantic evening, or just a little company when you're sitting alone with your thoughts. - Jim T.

GRIEF - *Miserably Ever After* (Theologian Records, P.O.Box 1070, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254) Total full-out DOOM. Your typical doom band though; nothing new about it. Real slow, dragging, lots of feedback, screaming, and 10-minute long songs. Didn't impress me at all. - Phil P.

GUITAR WOLF - *Missile Me* (Matador/ Less Than TV) While we're on the subject of gutbucket guitar trash, let's not forget Japan's king of the trash ass guitar, GUITAR WOLF, with his MATADOR RECORDS debut, "MISSILE ME". High energy, bottom of the barrel production (kinda like the late great TEENGENERATE) with a definite mid-60's punk vibe that brings to mind everyone from THE STOOGES to PUSSY GALORE. I like these guys better every album, even though the first two are fuckin' awesome, this is even better than "KUNG FU RAMONE" and "WOLF ROCK". No matter how you slice it, this record is amazing. You cannot live without this record. Eat it. - David B.

HALF STRING - *A Fascination with Heights* (Independent Project Records, P.O. Box 1033, Sedona, AZ, 86339) "Tortoise, what are you hiding from?" These are lyrics begging for abuse and they've come to the right place. The record company made the unfortunate mistake of hyping this band on the sticker that sealed the CD case. Instead of the innovations they promised, I endured endless rat-a-tat beats, anal vocals, silly strumming sessions, and the aforementioned lame lyrics. Picture the soundtrack to every cheesy commercial that targets us generation X'ers--these guys aren't even that good. No one should have a fascination with this. - Michael C.

HANDSOME (Epic) The majority of the members in this band need no introduction, for their past outfits include groups ranging from Helmet to the Cro-Mags, and their experience and talent shines through on this release. After a couple of only fair sounding singles, Handsome is finally able to express their true sound on their self-titled debut. Produced by the band and Terry Date, the enormity of their sound pounds through your speakers on nearly every track. Pete Hines' relentless drumming combined with the sonic thrust of Eddie Nappis' bass create a combination that explodes with brute force. Guitarists Tom Capone and Peter Mengede trade off each other with ease and effectiveness displaying technical mastery as well as heaviness. Handsome, like Mengedes' former band Helmet, can at times fall into ruts where you feel like the songs run into each other. This is particularly true about vocalist Jeremy Chatelain. However, while this occurs at various points on the disc, songs like "Going to Panic", "Dim the Lights" and "Waiting" are examples of the band at its best, combining pounding rhythms with a great sense of harmony. This is a great record, hands down, and worth picking up if you are interested in seeing where the future of rock is headed. - Rich Q.

HALFMAN - *As Everything Fell Apart* (Luddite Framework/PO Box 216/Port Jeff Sta., NY 11776) For some reason many east coast hardcore/emocore bands over the years have found it necessary to make a trek to DC's Inner Ear studio to record their music. The reason must be the history, 'cause it sure isn't the quality. Some have gotten lucky (those blessed with their own good ears and studio knowledge, or a producer with those qualities), but most have gone home with a thin overall sound, and drums that sound like cardboard boxes. Unfortunately, this CD suffered the consequences. I imagine this band was an intense, energetic live hardcore band with a vocalist sounding not unlike Springa (SSD), but the studio softened any punches they may pack. There's more meat in the packaging itself - nice artwork.

HEMLOCK - *Give Kids Candy* (Liquid Meat Records PO Box 460692 Escondido Ca. 92046-0692) I had been waiting for quite a while for a full length from this band, having really liked the stuff that they put out on Goldenrod Records. It took this band nearly six years to release a full lease, for some of the members split time in bands like Radio Wendy and Tanner, but this was definately worth the wait. The record has a nice

balance of aggression and punk fury led by the strong guitar playing of Chris Prescott. Hemlock will lull the listener into a false sense of serene security before suddenly taking your head off with their power. Another twist and highlight of the record is the cello playing by Prescott's mom, which can be found on the final track of the album, the haunting "Twelve Letters". Hemlock combines several different musical elements and directions to create an expressive and engaging release, particularly on songs like "Missing Link", "Shamu Tone", and "Systematic Waste". Hopefully, they will concentrate solely on this band, so we won't have to wait so long for the next release. - Rich Q.

HICKEY - (*Probe Records* PO Box 5068 Pleasanton, NJ 94566) You can't go wrong with a song that's named "40 oz of Bad Karma".... This band has a strong pop/ punk sound similar to bands like Sinkhole and Weston. This release is worth checking out but nothing to write home to the folks about. - Stacey H.

HOBEX - *Payback* EP (Phrex Records, P.O. Box 3490, Chapel Hill NC 27515) I don't know about you folks, but this humble scribe would rather be on the receiving end of a root canal performed by a drunken dentist than hear another collection of blue-eyed funk. This includes North Carolina's Hobex, a better-than-average musical trio that includes former Dillon Fence members Greg Humphreys and Andy Ware. Mining an artistic vein that the Red Hot Chili Peppers cleaned out a decade ago, the band's *Payback* EP is a down-and-dirty six-pack of funky riffs and soulful vocals, evoking memories of James Brown, The Isley Brothers and Earth, Wind & Fire. The songs here play as cliched and affected, however, without a shred of originality or heart. Whereas the enduring eternal question once was "can a white boy sing the blues?" perhaps it's time we asked, "can a white boy feel da Funk?" After listening to Hobex's *Payback*, methinks the answer to be a resounding "No!" - Reverend K.

HOT WATER MUSIC - *Fuel for the Hate Game* (No Idea/Toybox Records PO Box 14636 Gainesville Florida 32604-4636) I was very impressed with this record, having no idea what to expect. Hot Water Music play intense, highly melodic hardcore which defies a simple label. The vocals are just remarkable, for their pained intensity makes a wild centerpiece for this noisy, excellent band. They reminded me of early Fugazi at times, taking chances with their songs. Overall, this a very solid record that helps to push hardcore in a new and more interesting direction. There is a lot of talent here, and the band mixes musical skill with blind rage with amazing effectiveness. - Rich Q.

HUMBLE GODS - *No Heroes* (Hollywood) Something bugs me about this record. It looks good and sounds great, but it also leaves a sour taste in my mouth. I guess Doug Carrion (ex Descendents/Dag Nasty) has started playing punk music again seeing that its profitable these days. Having put an end to his neo-psyche band Pale (who were nothing short of amazing IMO), he opts now for a more Fat/Epitaph sound. And having this released on Hollywood Records (who will drop them like a sack of wet shit when they fall short of selling 100,000 copies), only adds to the confusion. If you were to look beyond all the pretense and ulterior motives, you may just find something you like on this disk. It's catchy, well produced and punk sounding, but tracks like "American Dream" just don't convince me under the circumstances. - John L.

HUMIDIFIER - *Nothing Changes* (Link, 121 W 27th Street, New York NY 10001) Superchunk's Jim Wilbur and Spent's John King formed Humidifier when they were college students together, long before either dreamed of their ascension to indie-rock godhead. Their most recent reunion (along with drummer Denis Saulnier, who wisely got a *real* job after college) resulted in this CD, which I was expecting to like a lot more. It's got that zingy ringing guitar sound you expect from Superchunk and that wonderful, winsome innocence that John King brings to his songs in Spent, but nothing here really grabs you by the throat and says anything except "side project." - Jim T.

INDECISION - *Unorthodox* (Exit Records PO Box 263 New York, NY 10012) Pure ponding hardcore out of Brooklyn. As the story goes, these guys supposedly all met in Catholic school. You can hear them discussing spiritual issues in their lyrics, which generally deal with the topics of questioning one's beliefs and exploring the answers on your own. In addition to well conceived lyrics, there is pummeling music. The band is extremely heavy with an impressive rhythm section that anchors the songs. At times, Indecision can become slightly repetitive. However, the majority of this disc features a band that understands how to use anger as fuel to create some fresh sounding hardcore. The really hit the mark on songs like "I Believe", "Resurrection" and "Worlds Apart". In addition, you get a collection of brief recorded moments from the band's tour in which they discuss everything from Tetris being a Communist game to pot to body piercings. Pretty cool. - Rich Q.

THE INSTEPS - *Eleven Steps to Power* (Another Planet) The more ska I hear, the more I'm getting into it. When your day sucks, music that can make you happy is a big plus. A nine piece (with the help of 7 guest artists) from Brooklyn that adds to the flavor of the product with a touch of jazz and soul. A fine group of musicians that knows how to mesh so many individuals talents into a fun beat. - Tom B.

THE INVALIDS - *Out of My Head* (Second Guess Records, PO BOX 9382 Reno NV) Three and four chord party punk that proudly sports its influences on its sleeve. I hear the Queers, The Vindictives, Green Day and Screeching Weasel. Pity that they're all the same band, in their quest for Ramones mania. There's a few good pop tunes here and there, but this sound is so overdone, I barely made it through the first 7 tracks. However, if you're 15 and bored, you'll love the Invalids. - John L.

IVET - *Failure Boy* (Primitive Records, PO Box 95, Boiling Springs, PA 17007) Time to combine words to name musical genres. Grunge-blues. Heavy, grunge-like music with a bluesiness to many of the songs. Slick and boring, with faux-angst vocals. Ooh, I feel your pain. Do you feel mine? - Paul S.

J CHURCH - *The Drama of Alienation* (Honest Don's P.O. Box 192027 San Francisco, Ca 94119-2027) A fairly fattened sound for the new J Church full length. God, these guys put out a new record every other week. Bigger, chunkier guitars and an even more focused sense of direction and melody, while remaining unmistakably J Church. I've always admired Lance's lyrics and this just may well be his best work to date. He conveys a very good picture of life in San Francisco. Check out 'Smell it Rot' and 'Santa Cruz'. Honest and to the point in all areas. Yet another good one for punk rock's most prolific and hard working power trio. - John L.

THE JIMMIES - *Countdown* (Schizophonic, 232 S.E. Oak St. Suite 100 Portland, OR 97214) Descriptions of the horrors and melodramas of life make for an interesting listen. If you love to wallow in the misery and hopelessness that is life in this capitalistic, fascist/nuclear society, this is your favorite record. A frightening document of angry destruction (while intoxicated of course), and one of the best '77 style punk records in a while.

-John R.

JIMMY EAT WORLD - *Static Prevails* (Capitol) This young quartet comes out of Arizona like a poppier Jawbox, complete with mood-altering melodies and shifting dynamics that bring songs from a whisper to a scream in the space of a well-modulated riff. The vocals recall J. Robbins' soulful intensity, while the guitars alternately chime, chug, and squeal in tasty combinations. Add solid, fast drumming and a succession of ear-tickling tunes and you've got one thoroughly enjoyable CD. - Jim T.

JJ's GREATEST BAND ON EARTH (JJ, P.O. Box 465, New City, N.Y. 10956) Weird mix of stuff. Too much rap crap in it for me. Sort of a Bare Naked Ladies clone, taking it to the alleys. - Rodney L.

JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION - *Now I Got Worry* (Matador) Getting back to a much more rawer sound that hearkens back to the days of PUSSY GALORE and the "CRYPT STYLE" LP instead of the STAX-influenced "ORANGE", this one includes a track with a guest appearance from Mr. Memphis himself, RUFUS THOMAS! This is another essential slab. This guy never put out a shitty record when he fronted PUSSY GALORE and he has yet to put out a shitty JSBX record. What a fuckin' track record this guy has! This one should be pretty easy to get, so you ain't got no excuse not to have it. Get off yer good fer nuthin' ass and go get this damn rekkid. You will not be sorry. - David B.

THE JOYKILLER - *Static* (Epitaph) - It used to be said that every band on Epitaph sounded like Bad Religion, although with the success of bands like The Offspring and Rancid the Epitaph brass seem to be signing poppier acts that don't strain the grey matter as much as they serve up consonant, clean riffs and logical choruses: the antithesis of indie rock. Naturally, the kids are eating it up and The Joykiller are no exception. Actually, there aren't more than a handful of sure-fire hits here; "White Boy, White Girl" steals the show with its high-end riff and rebel-teen theme: "What a night/Runnin' away from the cops/Gettin' high, drinkin' until we dropped." The first half of the album rolls with an equally manic passion, songs like "Hate," "I Don't Know," and "Brainless" are great straight-up punk anthems, and Ronnie King's occasional piano accompaniment adds a touch of seriousness to the project. It isn't until the last four or five songs that things



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seriousness to the project. It isn't until the last four or five songs that things begin to get stale, however, and I can name more than a few albums that went platinum on shakier ground than that. - Dan E.

JOYSTICK - *Heavy Chevy* (Lobster Records, PO Box 1473 Santa Barbara, CA 93102) - Joystick sound a lot like most west coast bands with that Lagwagon ripp off songwriting. It's real tight riffs and all and I'm sure they're funny and stuff but...it doesn't justify their still sucking. Lobster, Fearless, Hopeless...what's the difference? - Dave T.

KEETA SPEED - *Get Dressed Twice* (Gimlet, 534 E. 6th St. #3, NY NY 10009) Sometimes the pretense of some performers really surprises me. This Keeta Speed guy already has the audacity to name his band after himself. What does the band think, I wonder? Do you think they're bitter? I do. Mr. Speed, after all, has asked them to stray all over the map musically, offering precious little in terms of originality or consistency. Maybe he didn't ask 'em to do that, though....maybe they're so bitter about getting no attention themselves that they're trying to fuck with this ridiculously art damaged man who shamelessly cops his vocal style freely from Neil Young, Bowie and Adam Sandler. Destruction from within. - Mike F.

KEPONE (Quarterstick Records, PO Box 25342, Chicago, IL 60625) Exciting, heavy math rock is a generally good way of describing Kepone's latest. The band is tight and the songs are excellent. Some of the songs are really out of the ordinary, such as "Liner Hymn" and "Leave Your Bones." Some of them remind me of a punkier NOMEANSNO crossed with Shellac. Odd meters abound amidst pounding drums, thumping bass, blazing guitars. Possibly their best release to date. Recommended. - Paul S.

KISS IT GOODBYE - *She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not* (Revelation) Angry white-guy music by ex-Deadguys. No, that doesn't do this justice. VERY angry white-guy music. - Jim T.

KNOCKOUT DROPS - *Nowadays* (Kod Records) I live in New Hampshire and I drink a good amount of coffee. As a result, I've heard records by the likes of the Indigo Girls, Dave Matthews and the Samples around a billion times, as those bands and bands like 'em seem to compose the musical canon in coffeehouses in this predominantly mellow, crunchy state. The Knockout Drops would fit right into the aforementioned canon, I think, with their well-sung but slightly innocuous vocals and acoustic/not-too-noisy electric guitar approach to things. In short, the kind of music that you can read or have a conversation to without a whole lot of interference. - Mike F.

KULA SHAKER - *K* (Columbia Records) Mostly pretty ordinary alternative rock music, with a heavy dose of early 70s psyche/Beatles/Pink Floyd influence, and smaller doses of funk and Eastern influence. Though there are a few tracks that show a much heavier Indian influence, such as the instrumental, "Sleeping Jiva." Did I like this? Sometimes. The tracks which had less of the alternative rock feel and more psyche or Eastern sounds were more pleasing to listen to than the plain old alternative rock. The drug music of the 90s. - Paul S.

LESS THAN JAKE - *Losing Streak* (Capitol) Less Than Jake are back for their thirteenth(!?) release, but their first for a major label. Yeah, they're on a major, so all you punker-than-thou kids can now look away in disgust and stop reading this review. However, the rest of you who have matured beyond worrying about what label a band is on will be happy to know that LTJ continue to bash out their ska-fueled punk pop with big smiles on their faces. Positive energy just flows throughout this record from start to finish, and after only being limited to a glut of 7 inches recently, it was nice to hear a LTJ full-length, featuring all original songs. For those of you who are new to the band, LTJ will remind of early Bosstones, before they went downhill. These Florida-based, 80's loving goofs bounce through sixteen songs here; highlights include "Sugar in Your Gas Tank", "Johnny Quest Thinks We're Sellouts", "Ask the Magic 8-Ball" and "Jen Doesn't Like Me Anymore". The same DIY mentality that earned LTJ so many fans is still present on this album. Now let's hope, and I know this is asking a lot, that the kids at Capitol realize what they have here, and dip into their limitless pool of money to promote this band the right way. - Rich Q.

LILYS - *Better Can't Make Your Life Better* (Che/Primary/Sire) Imagine a reversed world where the Beatles are an American band influenced by Estrus recordings, and you've imagined the world of the Lilys. Pop constructionalist Kurt Heasley sounds a bit like Robert Pollard (Guided By Voices) in the throat, but his jangling guitar seems to be straight out of the garage ridden 60's. Adorned with catchy pop melodies and a smooth production that almost sounds analog, the Lilys come about as close to raw garage/pop as any band can in 1996. Good songs that never find boredom. -Greg M.

LIQUID SPIDER STATION - *Exaggerated Slices Of Reality* (Caustic Soda 4 Oak St. Bayonne NJ 07002) These guys remind me of Husker Du. Good alternative disc but being 22 minutes long it's a short listen. All of the nine songs are decent but none of them stood out on its own. - Den S.

LOS ASS-DRAGGERS - *Abbey Roadkill* (Crypt Records) Basic-formula fast speed-punk from Ovedo, Spain - home of excellent sword and knife making. Each song has a liner note such as: the Beatles suck, girls with piercings, good riddance to Jerry Garcia, etc. I guess when you do 21 songs in 22 minutes, there's just not much time for originality. - Tom B.

LUNACHICKS - *Pretty Ugly* (Go-Kart Records, PO Box 20 Prince Street Station New York, NY 10012) The Lunachicks continue to improve with each release and *Pretty Ugly* is another step forward for this outrageously great band. The playing here is better than anything they have done before, with the guitar work both fast and crisp. Theo's air-raid siren voice cuts through a thick wall of punk fury on nearly every track. There is also the classic twisted sense of humor that fans of this band should recognize with songs like "The Day Squid's Gerbil Died", "Mr.Lady" and "Mmmm...Donuts". The Lunachicks are now a band to be reckoned with, writing incredibly catchy, aggressive songs like "Yeah", and "Gone Kissin". They even slow things down, becoming a bit more subdued and reflective on "What's Left". This is an overall solid record and another cool release from Go-Kart. - Rich Q.

MARTIAN TOM - *Mud Painter* (Gumshot Records, PO Box 3152, Bethlehem, PA 18017) Martian Tom make no bones about it. They are a "modern rock / alternative" band - in the vilest sense of the term. i.e. There's nothing alternative or modern about their music. There's plenty of influences from 70's Southern rock and top 40 bands. The vocals have a strange, throaty quality that's kind of annoying. Stay clear. - Paul S.

MATCHBOX 20 - *Yourself or Someone Like You* (Lava/Atlantic) Pretty ordinary, bland, country-tinged rock that's probably a little too slick and commercial sounding even for commercial alternative radio stations. - Paul S.

MAZZY STAR - *Among My Swan* (Capitol Records) Dull pop-folk-country music with a forced dreaminess. Lots of country jangle in the guitars, lethargic female vocals. Every song is the same slow ballad style. It got boring real fast. - Paul S.

McRACKINS - *Back To The Crack* (One Louder Records, PO Box 1NW New castle upon Tyne NE99 1NW.UK) Damn, these nutty Canucks are almost as prolific as Lance the boys from J Church. *Back To The Crack* is just as fun as catchy as anything else they've done. I've said it about these guys before, and I'll say it again, with pop-punk bands today being a dime a dozen, few bands can come off as good and original as these kooks. - Rick K.

McRACKINS - *Best Friend* (Shredder, 75 Plum Tree Lane #3, San Rafael, CA 94901) Fabulously snotty sounding pop-punk. This ain't the watered down MTV version of pop-punk. This is the real deal. One can hear influences from the Ramones to early Necros to Screeching Weasel. Fast, loud, and unpretentious. This is great stuff that you should be listening to right now. - Paul S.

ME FIRST (Broken Rekkids) Lo-fi, fuzzy, yet jangly indie garage pop. The vocals sound honest and passionate. The songs are upbeat and fun. At times I am reminded of the late, great, lamented Vertebrats, a local garage band from Champaign-Urbana, IL from more than a decade ago. I want to hear more. Five songs is just not enough from this band. - Paul S.

MEARTH - *LB* (Maggadee Records, Po Box 66, Hoboken NJ 07030) This consistently moody, heavy, angered, guitar-frenzied record establishes its point early and does not let up. Most tracks feature screamed vocals delivered in a tone of pure frustration while soaring guitar chops cut through the air. One thing that I really enjoyed is that some of the songs bury you right from the opening second, while other take their time and build up to a brutal climax. There are occasional lapses where the guitar playing sounds a bit too much like late-80's metal, but that does not detract from the overall strength of the album. This is a twelve song adrenaline rush with not one slow one in the bunch and great lyrics. This is a guaranteed insane live experience. You have probably heard a lot of other bands like this, but Mearth delivers their songs free from any pretentious attitude. This a raw, honest record which combines intense anger and melody with remarkable results. - Rich Q.

MOIST BOYZ - *Moist Boyz II* - (Grand Royal) It is always a cool feeling when one of your favorite guitar players walks up to you at a gig and hands you his latest record. Of course I am talking about Mickey Moist himself (aka Dean Ween.) A second sign this cd is a classic is when your editor hands you a 2nd copy. So with that in mind the set up is clear: the Moist Boyz attack is awesome. The most dubious track is hawked out by Dickie Moist (aka Guy Heller of the False Front) "Good Morning America," as far as the open rock ballads go. The songs with criminal lyrics like "Crank" and "Second Hand Smoke" invite a certain kind of cynicism for the listener to envision. Then you realize, "Shit these songs are all good," and on the whole the album is too short, but then again there wouldn't be anything to look forward to in the future. Moist Boyz are a band to behold in the archives of the rarely seen; yet revered in the moistest rock and rankest dreams. - Dave U.

MOJO NIXON - *Gadzooks!!! The Homemade Bootleg* (Needletime, 2116 Guadalupe, Austin, TX 78705) - Sadly enough, Mojo Nixon is back on the scene with what has to be one of the most pathetically ironic releases ever - his own "bootleg" of his own material. This time around even Skip Roper has gone on to greener pastures; with songs like "I Like Marijuana" and "The Poontango," it isn't hard to see why. On another song, Mojo prophetically informs us that "Beer Ain't Drinkin'": "I'm a queer for beer/And as thirsty as a moose(?)." In yet another moment of poetic shining brightness, we're informed that "High School is a Prison." Thanks, Mojo. A more embarrassing waste of laser technology I have not witnessed since Weird Al Yankovic's "Alapalooza." - Dan E.

MORCHEEBA - *Who Can You Trust?* (Discovery) The most recent evolutionary skip in hip-hop is no longer being projected by type-A gansta' roughies, but by a small group of transcendental mellow heads. It's being called 'trip-hop' and its psychedelic beatbox bite can be heard in the likes of Tricky and Morcheeba. Put Sade on a steady diet of mushrooms and marijuana and let her groove to hip-hop beats at half speed and you've met up with Morcheeba. "Trigger Hippy" starts with a slow backbeat and the tease of a sitar, with the beautiful black Seirenes, Skye Edwards, calling, 'Tune in, drop out, and love/Pull the trigger/I'm a hippie'. Seductive, psychedelic, and steady. . . my three favorite S's. One listen and you'll be charmed. - Greg M.

THE MULTIPLE CAT - "Territory" Shall Mean The Universe (Zero Hour 14 W. 23 St., New York, NY 10010) I've been waiting for this album since I heard their summer release, "The New Marcus Aurelius" 7". Just as I suspected, these guys ARE as eclectic as the 45 suggested. I am not disappointed. The Cat are hard to nail down. What is obvious is that these

guys are wholly competent musicians who totally love to play. If you want to talk comparisons, we can go from The Cure to the Stones, Pixies to Supertramp, and from Sonic Youth to Metallica. . . okay, I'm joking about Metallica, but the point being, these guys are not operating under any contrived idea of who they should be as a band, they just do what feels good and what agrees with the policy of rock-n-roll. There is some honest rock experimentation going on here and it'll definitely make you want to dance. -Greg M.

MXPX - *Move To Bremerton* CD-EP (Tooth and Nail) - Five melodic punk rock tunes that will instantly have you falling in love all over again. The opening track has the best lines, "I'm a sucker for a short hair girl with a pretty smile." Ahhh...bliss. And there's even a live radio take of an acoustic punk tune, "Chick Magnet" that makes this album one staying in the stereo for a long time. - Dave B.

MY OWN VICTIM - *No Voice No Rights No Freedom* (Century Media Records 1453-A 14th Street #324 Santa Monica Ca. 90404) A very heavy hardcore meets metal hybrid. However, their musical prowess raises this band far above most in this genre. The emotion shines through right from the opening seconds of this predominately politically-flavored disc. According to their bio, this band developed a fairly large and devoted following in Europe. Hopefully, listeners on these shores will wake up and pay attention to the Kentucky-based outfit, for they produce a huge sound with plenty of speed, intelligent lyrics, impressive guitar work, and passionate vocals. Luckily, they do not fall into the trap of relying on redundant metal riffs to maintain a sense of volume. Instead they take the speed of hardcore and combine it with the Doomsday sound of metal to create a bombastic attack that will force you to take notice. The record is driven by the pure anger and energy of the five talented members. Very impressive. - Rich Q.

NERF HERDER-(Arista) Nerf Herder succeeds where most other bands desperately fail: being witty, charming, full of tongue-in-cheek irony without sounding corny. They make me feel good about being seventeen, setting to a pop-punk vibe the good things about being that age (girls, rock, etc.). Forget corporate b.s., rock egos and the rest of the baggage associated with the bigtime; Nerf Herder are masters at satirizing the excess of 90's commercial alternarock and do it with a poignant charm that makes you lust after them. I still can't stop listening, and laughing. - John R.

NERK TWINS - *Either Way* (Broken Records, 305 S. Westmore, Lombard, IL 60148) Apparently Jeff Murphy from the 70's powerpop group the Shoes is back with his friend Herb Eimerman as the Nerk Twins. Well, I guess the energy of the Shoes vanished with the 70's, because these twins have a



MOIST BOYZ



OKARA

Photo by Shawn Scallen

N.I.L.8 - *...Doug* (Fuse Records Po Box 578497 Chicago IL 60657) This band bases its sound around addictive hooks and goofy lyrics that run rampant throughout this release. There are brief flashes of low-fi punk, monstrous over-the-top guitar rock and hip-hop style vocals. Each song has the potential to be a giant sing along that will make you pogo with a smile, but the joke starts to wear a little thin about halfway through the disc. Songs about zombie sluts, vomit and trash-television talk shows are fun, and while some of their audio experiments are a blast, N.I.L.8 can sound painful when they come up flat. That happens several times on the record where the humor just does not catch and the riffs sound like they are trying to keep up with the vocalist. This is the kind of band you want playing at your next party, but not a disc you will have on heavy rotation. - Rich Q.

NEW YORK SKA-JAZZ ENSEMBLE- *Low Blow* (Moon Ska, PO BOX 1412, Cooper Station NY, NY 10276) Surprisingly good collection of ska-influenced jazz. Has nothing at all in common with any of these two bit poseurs that have flooded the market with that "ska core" horseshit that passes for ska these days. These guys are very accomplished musicians and their good tastes show in their choice of cover material- "Naima" by John Coltrane, "Jive Samba" by Cannonball Adderly and "Mr. Pitiful" by Otis Redding" just to name three. And their originals are just as good. Heavier on the jazz side than the ska. Very enjoyable and highly recommended. - David B.

NIPPER (ITU Records PO Box 648 New York, NY 10011) College alternative rock. This thing was recorded in one of the band members' basement. The vocals reminded me of Matthew Sweet. Other than "Cancellation Blues," none of the songs caught my ear. - Den S.

NUEVO CATECISMO CATOLICO - *Aun No Hables Visto Nada* - (No Tomorrow) I never knew Spain was such a hotbed of punk, but Nuevo Catecismo Catolico churn out Ramones flavored punk with a Spanish flair. The cover of this disc tells you almost everything about the band, as each member seems to be imitating a pose of their favorite Ramone. One guy is wearing a New York Dolls T-shirt, and there is even a Dictators cover. Overall, the playing is extremely simplistic, but refreshing, for each song is honest and direct. The rough production gives this disc an instantly likable sound. This disc is sung entirely in Spanish, which can be frustrating, yet Gonzolo Ibanez has a great vocal delivery. This is punk rock played by four guys with a true love for the music. There should be more of this in any language. - Rich Q.

NO EMPATHY - 'Ben Weasel Don't Like It' CD EP (Broken Records, PO BOX 460402 San Francisco, CA 94146-0402) CD re-issue of the best No Empathy EP for those who missed the joke the first time around. Worth it alone for their cover of Bad Religion's 'Chasing the Wild Goose' from the embarrassment LP of the 80s 'Into the Unknown'. Better mastering and punk as fuck without being generic. Cool! - John L.

NOT REBECCA - *Rocketship to Canada* (Johann's Face Records, PO Box 479164, Chicago, IL 60647) A solid performance from these Chicago veterans. Musically, this could be classified as indie rock. It's too rock to be pop, but not "commercial" sounding enough to be "alternative." A friend of mine listened to it and likened it to "Soul Asylum before they started to suck." The musicianship is excellent, and Chicago music legend Chuck Uchida's engineering is spotless. Recommended. - Paul S.

NOTHING COOL - *Don't Tell Me What to Do* (Clearview Records 2157 Pueblo Drive Garland, TX 75040) Melodic and snappy, but often atonal punk rock of demo quality pressed on to a CD. There's quite a bit of energy and drive where the production and originality lacks. Lyrics and topics seem to reflect that of an angry oppressed youth, while thankfully far from giving off a tough guy image. Great graphics design. Sounds like they put in a good amount of time and effort. A band that's sure to grow with age. - John L.

NOTHING COOL - *Don't Tell Me What To Do* (Clearview Records) - Great name and definitely one of my new favorite bands. This album rocks out with melodic punk tunes ranging from fast paced teen angst to a mid-tempo punk cover of the Temptations' "My Girl" that makes this album irresistible. - Dave B.

OBLIVIANS - *Popular Favorites* (Crypt Records 1409 W. Magnolia, Burbank, CA 91506) From the home of the King, Memphis, Tennessee, comes the sounds of those teen faves, THE OBLIVIANS, with their hot new platter, "POPULAR FAVORITES", on the tough-as-nails CRYPT RECORDS. Though I didn't see how they could ever do it, these cats have improved upon their CRYPT debut slab, "SOUL FOOD". This is gutbucket R&B punk n' roll, the way the gods intended. Ferocious slash and burn rawk rawk rawk. Imagine Hound Dog Taylor backed by the Pagans and you start to get the photo op, greaseball. Got the kids a-screamin' for that BIG BEAT!!!!!! - David B.

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ODDS - Nest (Elektra Entertainment) An updating of 80s top-40 power-pop. If you're into that kind of sound, then this is going to make you happy. Catchy melodies and power-a-plenty abound. But it's all just a little to slick and MTV-ready for my tastes. - Paul S.

OKARA - Months Like Years (Spectra Sonic Sound, Box 80067, Ottawa Ont. K1S 5N6 Canada) Sadly this will be the last music produced by Okara. This unique and hauntingly strange band is no more. Hailing from Ottawa, this noisy three piece created an album of somewhat disjointed yet fascinating songs. Each track is played with a fierce determination, which does not mean that the songs are particularly heavy or speedy. Okara are a perfect example of how a band can create engaging music without relying solely on speed or mindless force. The songs usually feature one central riff from which sonic emissions swirl about and are pierced by vocals that are told at you, rather than truly sang or screamed. At times, the tracks do seem to run out of steam, but as a listener, you will remember this band. Look for one of the members in a new outfit called 30 Second Motion Picture. - Rich Q.

ONE KING DOWN - Bloodlust Revenge (Equal Vision Records P.O. Box 14 Hudson, NY 12534) Sounds like 311 jock rock (i.e. Rage Against The Machine.) Eh. Angry guy music... kinda boring - Eva S.

ORBIT - Libido Speedway (A&M) And I bet you thought grunge was dead. - Jim T.

PACHINKO - Behind The Green (Alternative Tentacles) A cross between Mr. Bungle, Neurosis, Brutal Truth, and Sepultura. Too much distortion for me. It messed up my speakers. - Rich H.

PEP RALLY - Deadline (Onefoot Records Inc.) Foot tappin', fast tempo'd, smile producing punk. Songs like "Mr. Punk" and "Kinder Surprise" have that typical pop/ punk sound. If you own or like Bender or Weston, you may want to put this one on your shopping list. - Stacey H.

PEPPERCORN - Salt Dough Academy (Some Guy Down The Street Records, PO Box 420455, San Francisco CA 94142) Press kit sez: "bashing-smashing-punk-power-pop." Jim sez: "Sounds like Jawbreaker." - Jim T.

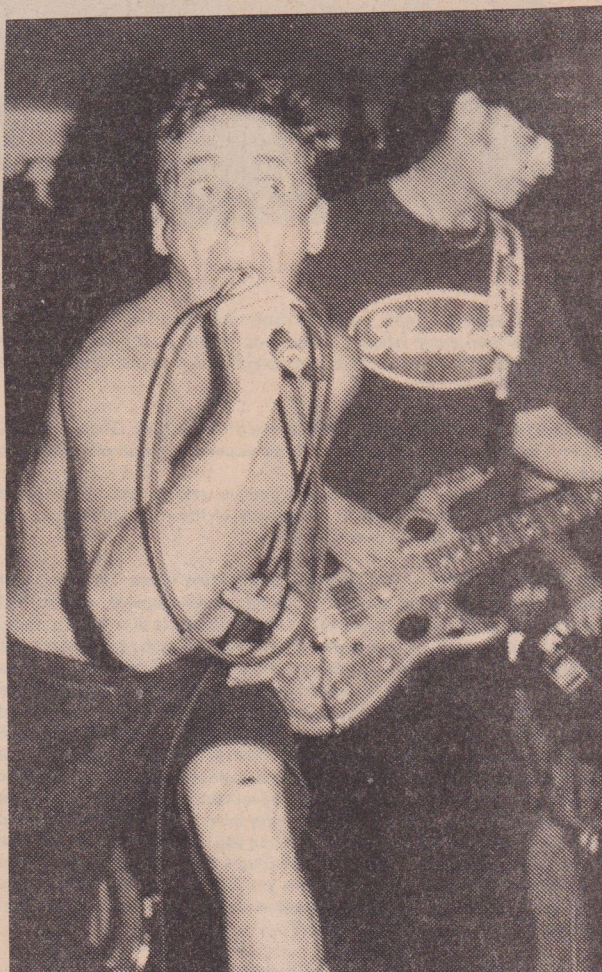
PEZZ / 2-LINE FILLER Split CD (Bitter Sweet Records Suite 1403 New York, New York 10010) This is the third in a series of releases by Bitter Sweet, and this split features two punk-pop bands that have a solid grasp of what they want to do. The quality of this disc will ultimately decide on whether or not you enjoy bouncy, harmless punk pop. To their credit, the bands play with a great deal of fun and manage to keep their sounds tight and focused. 2 Line Filler is just aching for college radio play, and I'm sure they'll get it, playing stuff that is happy, safe and just raw enough to keep it from being too pretty. Pezz is right along the same track as 2 Line Filler, only the vocals here are a bit tougher and angrier. Pezz has a certain snarl to their style that caught my ear. It was almost akin to "Hate Your Friends"-era Lemonheads or Mission Of Burma. You're heard this a million times before, but the energy and honesty was there, so I ended up liking it. - Rich Q.

PINHEAD GUNPOWDER - Goodbye Ellston Avenue (Lookout Records Po Box 11374 Berkeley Ca. 94712) This band has been around in some form for about six years, and I am going to label it a side project or anything else. The sound here is instantly recognizable, due primarily to the vocals, and I'm going to get into who is doing the singing. (His name is Billie, and he plays guitar too). Frankly, I'm sick of this three chord stuff. There is only so much you can listen to, and only so far the music can be stretched. This kind of thing only sounds like a boring retread. *Goodbye Ellston Avenue* sounds flat from beginning to end, but it is a very safe sound, and should radio get a hold of this, look out (no pun intended...really)! If you are a Lookout! fan, you'll eat this up. This personally is not for me, so I'll pass. One thing in this record's defense though is a cool Phil Ochs cover. You just do not hear enough of those. - Rich Q.

PINK LINCOLNS - Pure Swank (Stiffpole, PO Box 20721, St. Petersburg FL

33742) There are three things I know will happen every day: The sun will rise in the morning, the stars will come out at night, and Chris Barrows will be in a bad mood. The surly, savage, Iggyoid frontman of Tampa's ageless Pink Lincolns proves he's still just as mean and nasty as ever on this new disc, 13 cuts of instant punk-rock anthems featuring Barrows' snarling vocals and the equally ageless rock 'n' roll guitar of Dorsey Martin. My favorite tracks include "Screaming," ("screaming is cool, I do it all the time, I'm a screamer and I feel fine,") "My Car Is Gonna Kill Me," "Riot Barbie," and the hilarious "Your Generation Sucks" are all standouts. Okay, maybe the sun won't rise tomorrow... but as long as I can listen to the Pink Lincolns, who cares? - Jim T.

PLASTER OF PARIS, TEXAS - Diesel Motorcycle (PO Box 410433, Cambridge Mass. 02141) This disc features songs with titles like "Nancy Spungen", "Cockleshell" and "A Girl's Wet Dream of Dave Navarro", so I was not sure what to expect. I was amazed and very pleasantly surprised with what I found. The music here is refreshing and intense, plus I fell in love with Jhen Kobran's sometimes beautiful, sometimes vicious vocals. Diesel Motorcycle is full of unique sounding songs that blend well with one another. This trio has captured a huge sound, and interesting uses of time and tempo changes. While Kobran's vocals definitely carried to disc for me, her thick bass playing created a powerful foundation when paired with drummer Tod McFarland. Guitarist Cole Reinwand mixed up his playing enough to keep you guessing as a listener. Goofy name and song titles aside, this is a great, young band full of extremely talented musicians. Very solid. - Rich Q.



PINK LINCOLNS

PLOW UNITED - Goodnight Sellout! (Creep, 252 E. Market St. #220, West Chester PA 19381) Bratty pop-punk from suburban Pennsylvania, with fairly typical teen-angst lyrics. These kids have a pretty cool sense of humor though; how can you not love a song title like "West Chester Rock City?" - Jim T.



PROMISE RING

Photo by Shawn Scallen

Chester PA 19381) Bratty pop-punk from suburban Pennsylvania, with fairly typical teen-angst lyrics. These kids have a pretty cool sense of humor though; how can you not love a song title like "West Chester Rock City?" - Jim T.

PORTASTATIC - *The Nature of Sap* (Merge, PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514) Fascinating disc chock full of exotic pop music made with electronic and acoustic instruments. Piano, wind instruments, and acoustic guitar blend with synth and electric guitar to create one of the most interesting pop albums I've listened to in awhile. - Paul S.

THE PROMISE RING - *30 Degrees Everywhere* (Jade Tree) So, ever notice that a lot of record reviews are either clever slags of records that suck (see: most of mine this month) or deconstructions of a band's music in an attempt to make you understand? I have. Trying to deconstruct this one just won't work. So lemme give you two scenarios from today: 1) I was supposed to meet up with a friend of mine. I stood for fifteen minutes in the freezing New Hampshire-in-almost-December rain and got drenched and wondered where the hell he was. Never showed up. I stomped away, all pissed. 2) The class that I dread the most in this world got let out a half-hour early today. As I was leaving, this professor, somewhat notorious for being a harsh grader, handed back my last paper. I had been up 'til five typing it a few nights before and didn't really think it was that good. Big red letter: "A". I bounced out of that place feeling like I was in the title sequence of some John Hughes film. The Promise Ring's disc was the soundtrack for both of these scenarios. Songs to make you jump around and try to imitate the singer's wonderful off-key hoarseness and songs to take care of you when you're getting rained on. - Mike F.

THE PROMISE RING - *30 Degrees Everywhere* (Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd., Wilmington, DE 19810) This debut full-length follows the trend of other Midwestern emo outfits. This effort is more melodic and flows more smoothly and evenly than their previous recordings, but loses none of the intensity, power, and sincerity. There's less stop-and-start and more hooks, and violin is even used in some places, adding a nice effect. I've been awaiting this release for awhile, and was not disappointed at all. - Paul S.

PROTEIN (8391 Beverly Blvd. #298, Los Angeles, CA 90018) This is quirky

metal. The first two cuts are kinda funky metal, while the third track has a more traditional hard rock feel, with the exception of an Eastern sounding guitar break. The fourth track jumped around in style between metal, country, and alternative rock. On the one hand, the musical precision and the humor evident on this release are admirable. On the other hand, metal, and especially guitar solos from metal bands, are just too, well, wanky. - Paul S.

RACER TEN - *Melodies & Memories* (Onefoot Records, 8440 Remington Ave. Pennsauken, NJ 08110) This pop punk disc gave me mixed thoughts. The guitar and drums were pretty cool. The major problem with this band is the lead vocals. The lead singer's voice is boring and weak. He sings the same on every song, like he has other things on his mind. All the songs sound pretty much the same making this disc a 66 minute single (there is actually 16 songs). Nothing new here. - Den S.

RADIO FLYER - "in their strange white armor" EP (Polyvinyl Records, PO Box 1885, Danville IL 61834) This amazing EP resulted from a one-week collaboration between former members of Hoover and Gauge. It takes all of the post-hardcore ideas promulgated by not only those bands but innovators like Jehu and Quicksand and pushes them to the next level. Shifting dynamics, warped guitar tones, math-rock time signatures, enigmatic lyrics, pure naked emotion poured into the vocals... Haunting, hypnotic, spellbinding... Like I said, amazing. You need to hear this. - Jim T.

RAINER MARIA EP (Polyvinyl Records) A strangely beautiful confluence of male and female vocals, delicate drums, post-core guitars. Even when the two singers are screaming, the exquisite production imbues this with a shimmering, calming effect. Lovely, just lovely. - Jim T.

REFUSED - *Everlasting* (Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534) Straight-edge hardcore from Sweden. Some of the tunes are very typical of the current state of the genre: slow, crunchy, and metallic. "Sunflower Princess" is more old school: fast and loud, and it's the standout track. Not bad. - Paul S.

RELEVATORS - *We Told You Not To Cross Us* (Crypt Records, 1409 Magnolia, Burbank CA 91506) WOW! This record just roars from the opening second. Rockabilly never sounded like this. As the story goes, this entire release was recorded in one marathon eight hour session live directly

you in the face. A lot of people have heard the punk meets rockabilly thing before, particularly if you are familiar with Crypt, however this band is beyond what you may expect. They are able to maintain an early 60's garage feel while combining it with 90's aggression to create a sloppy masterpiece. They even throw in some classic blues and rockabilly tunes, going back to the Memphis Sun Studio era. Any and all Crypt fans will love this, and the curious should definitely start here. - Rich Q.

RESIN SCRAPER - *Heard Mentality* (Mag Wheel Records, P.O. Box 115, Station R, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2S 3K6) I never much liked the concept of the "desert island disc," that handful of records that you'd want by your side in the unlikely event that you're shipwrecked or stranded in the outback or fall prey to some other sort of calamity. I'd rather rate records by the "party principle," i.e. if you could only take one disk with you to play at a party, what would you choose? My current choice would be the Great White North's answer to the New Bomb Turks, Canada's Resin Scraper and their *Heard Mentality*. Showcasing a healthy mix of roots rock, garage band amateurism and hard-core energy, *Heard Mentality* mirrors perfectly the essence of punk: three chords and a "piss off" attitude. Coupled with the band's 90 mile-per-hour performances and hearty sledgehammer riffs, *Heard Mentality* is guaranteed by the Reverend Keith himself to jump-start any sort of gathering you find yourself being bored by. - Reverend K.

THE REVELERS - *Better get hit in your soul!* (Inbred Recording Co., PO Box 14157, Cleveland OH 44114) These Ohio kids in their white shirts and skinny black ties capture not only the sound of mid-60's garage rock but the innocence and charm as well... a little Hollies, a little Tommy James, and hey hey, a little Monkees. And the boys with the guitars say, "oh yeah." (Recorded in two days at Noise New Jersey. Make that a double "oh yeah.") - Jim T.

REX DAISY - *Guys And Dolls* (Pravda Records, 3823 North Southport, Chicago IL 60613) Mike Ruekberg writes the kind of infectious pop-tinged rock songs that the Replacements created a legend with, musical influences like Alex Chilton and Big Star much in evidence on *Guys And Dolls*. Rex Daisy don't come across as derivative (or, worse yet, revisionist), however, three-minute vignettes like "Stuck On AM" or "The Last Pufferbird" breathing fresh life into an all-too-tired alt-rock corpse. With songwriter Ruekberg pulling six string duties and contributing appropriate "skinny white guy" vocals, Rex Daisy's rhythm section of bassist Steve Price and drummer Jerry Anderson comprise a tight musical backbone for Rex Daisy's engaging sound. Highly recommended, if only for the brilliant album-opening ode to geekdom, "Stooge." With one great line, "it's not easy being a stooge when all the girls look so tan," Ruekberg has nailed the truth to the wall for a lot of us. - Reverend K.

RINGWURM (Probe, PO Box 5068, Pleasanton, CA 94566) If you're into that death rock, heavy metal, screaming at the top of your lungs sound than this record is for you. I did like the first song "Nomad" and the cover of Wall of Voodoo's "Mexican Radio" was hilarious. - Den S.

RUDER THAN YOU - *Horny for Ska* (Moon Ska) Ska-Schma. This is completely generic. I'm sick of this whole damn genre. It sounds like circus music for Bozo on a unicycle. I wonder if these jokers tour in a clown car. Now who's ruder than who? P.S. Thanks for ruining Paranoid. - TMF.

SARGE - *Charcoal* (Mud Records, 905 S. Lynn St., Urbana, IL 61801) Enthusiastic, energetic indie-pop. The band is tight, not sloppy. The harmonies are beautifully done. The now classic "Dear Josie, Love Robyn" is here, and is, of course, one of the stand-out tracks. It's definitely power-pop. "Chicago" is every bit as energetic and powerful, but with a darker feel. "Crush" has kind of a lo-fi garage feel to it. Damn, this is a fine album! - Paul S.

SAUCE - *The Cake Bake Disaster* (Hardtail, Box 1616, San Pedro, CA 90733) Sauce is mostly a novelty-folk act with an electric guitar, a drum kit, and a few good jokes. "Penetration Tonight" is very obviously a song about rape, but is only as offensive as any Beavis and Butthead-ism you'd laugh at one day and forget the next. "You've got the goods babe, I've seen you flaunt it/You're saying get off me but I know you want it/You come on tough, you want to be overpowered/By the end of the night you're gonna be deflowered." Other tunes, like "Why Can't You Be More Like My Stapler" and "She's a Stoner" assault us with hordes of school-yard puns and a low-decibel rock beat. Consider the pleading tome that is "G Spot": I am looking/Where can it be/Oh, I keep searching/But it haunts me/I gotta find it, G Spot." The real joke, of course, is that someone out there paid good money to release this album. If you see him on the street, laugh at him for me. - Dan E.

SCARED OF CHAKA - *Masonic Youth* (Empty) Hey!! Weston put out a new album already???? Who?... oh sorry. - Rich H.

SCARIES - "Stab It And Steer!" EP (Springbox) The Scaries specialize in a low-fi garagey rumble, with big twangy guitars and growly RFTC vocals. They go for a slower, more atmospheric Chris Isaak effect on "Mourning Sky" and "The Cage," and add a little psychobilly raunch on "Heater." Okay if you go for that Big Lonely Guitar sound and lots of reverb on the vox, but it's a little too determinedly retro for my ears. - Jim T.

SCISSORFIGHT - *Guaranteed Kill* (Wonderdrug Records) PC types are gonna love this one. The cover alone suggests that twisted minds lurk within. (Not to mention the 'Fuck Off and Eat Meat' mini pin up/fold out on the inside.) The music is heavily distorted and ugly with vocals that add to the mess. Hard, brutal slugde-core which crosses an Am Rep sound with Godflesh and slower Morbid Angel. Too bad there's no lyric sheet. On second thought, it's probably a good thing they didn't include one. - John L.

SELF - *Codename: Spivey* (Three Day Hero, 311 University Commons, Cayce SC 29033) As of this writing, Self are the greatest band in the South, hands down. This Columbia SC trio have all the tricks; all three are excellent musicians and the melodic songwriting of singer/guitarist John Sease is above most of his more successful peers. The naiveté of songs like "Chores," "Paper Route," and "Negative" is amazingly endearing and hints at the greater truth - these guys just don't know how good they are. If you like any of the bands on Dr. Strange or similar pop-punk labels, you owe it to yourself to seek this out. - Johnny P.

SEXPOD - *Goddess Blues* (Slab, 1133 Broadway #1120, NYC 10010) If they ever remake that Zsa Zsa Gabor sci-fi classic *Queen Of Outer Space*, Sexpod would make the perfect stars - three hypnotically alluring women of indeterminate age who emit strange throbbing sounds that turn men and boys - even the ones who don't like "metal" - into blubbing lumps of Silly Putty. Rock on. - Jim T.

THE SHAME IDOLS - *Rocket Cat* (Frontier Records) Very much like the power-pop of the 60s blended with the power-pop of the 70s and 80s. Bouncy and hook-laden, and very slickly produced. Some of the songs tend to sound almost top-40ish, except for the super buzzy guitars. Some of the songs were kind of cool in a retro sort of way, but some of them reminded me of the really bad radio I had to endure growing up. - Paul S.

SHINER - *Iula divinia* (Hiti! 1617 N. Hoyne, 1st floor, Chicago, IL 60647) Two-thirds of this Kansas City trio were the rhythm section in Season to Risk. This is a unit who can move from thunderous to delicate in a smooth, natural way. *Iula divinia* is reminiscent of "Savory" era Jawbox. The vocals, at times, sounding like a singing Page Hamilton. The care and effort put into these songs really shows in the intelligent guitar parts and creative drumming. There's a depth of musicianship here that few bands achieve. - TMF.

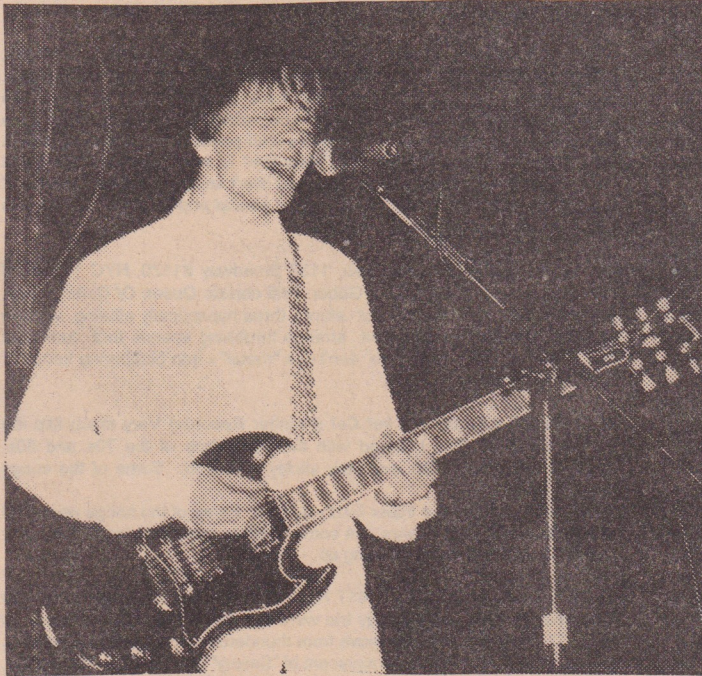
SHYSTER - *Say Uncle* (Off Time Records, PO Box 220763, El Paso, TX 79913) Pop punk with a vengeance! This sounds sorta like a cross between Bad Religion and Screeching Weasel, smoother in style but with the tempo practically doubled. This is fast 'n' loud music! Super energetic and passionate and fast! If you like pop-punk, then you will absolutely love this. I do. - Paul S.

THE SKOLARS - *10 Songs and the Some* (Jump Up Ska Records, 44091/2 Greenview, Suite 2w, Chicago, IL 60640) Finally! Finally!...A true, authentic, fun loving ska band who actually has a grasp of what the music should sound like. This disc is amazing from the opening track on. The Skolars are able to blend boundless energy with a fabulous tongue in cheek sense of humor. The band cranks out fast, upbeat, action-packed ska power for ten songs. After that, their sense of goofiness comes out. The last nine tracks are worth listening to for laughs. You will get everything from brief TLC covers to phone messages to some more great ska. Man, I loved this. Just great. - Rich Q.

SHUDDER TO THINK - *50,000 BC* (Sony Music Studios) In the immortal words of Emilio Estevez in "Repo Man" as he watched the Circle Jerks do a lounge act, "I can't believe I used to like these guys!" S2T has degenerated from a unique indie outfit into something halfway between commercial alternative and top-40 pop-rock. On a positive note, though, even after a serious illness, Craig Wedren still has one of the most unique and intriguing voices in modern rock music. - Paul S.

SICK BOY - *Wrecked 'Em? Damn Near Killed 'Em!* (Skunk Records, PO Box 20016 Grantham Postal Outlet St. Catharines, Ont., Canada L2M 7W7) - Reminds me of a poppier Supersuckers style rock with slicked hair and songs under 2 minutes. The kids have gotta be dancing around to these bunch of hosers from Canada. They even have a song called "Kids Are Rockin'." Yeah! - Dave T.

SIDEDOOR JOHNNIES - *fineline* (Good Guppy, PO Box 2342, Huntington NY 11743) It's one thing for a young trio to craft a tightly-wound paean to the Jam like the title track. You might almost expect that. But for the same three kids to also create the exquisitely Beatlesque "Lily Tilt" (complete with horns and woodwinds,) working strictly within their limited DIY resources, is another matter. And that's just the first two songs. Loud, soft, fast, slow, catchy or melodic, bittersweet or as sugary as power-pop, the range and craftsmanship the Sidedoor Johnnies showcase on this debut LP will sweep you off your feet and make you throw away all your Oasis and Smashing Pumpkin cd's in disgust. Is this the *Hootenanny* of the Nineties? Or the *Rubber Soul* of the next millenium? Color me impressed. - Jim T.



SIDEDOOR JOHNNIES

SILVER JET - *Pull Me Up...Drag Me Down* (Virgin) This L.A. trio's big, bouncy riffs, booming bottom, and tongue-in-cheek lyrics suggest a perfect marriage between Cheap Trick and the Presidents of the United States of America. Which leaves the decision to you: One "Lump" or two? - Jim T.

SISTER HAZEL - *Somewhere More Familiar* (Universal) What to say, what to say? If your into that whole roots rock thing (I'm not) you will probably enjoy this very much (I didn't). It's pretty basic stuff like that, dare I say it, a bit like Dave Matthews (eek!). -John R.

SLEEPASAURUS - *It's All Written Down And I Still Don't Fell Any Better* (Creep Records Suite 220 252 East Market St., EastChester, Pa. 19381/MotherBox Records 60 Denton Avenue East Rockaway NY 11518) Wow! Sleepasaurus explode through 12 go for broke punk anthems sure to delight any lonely guy out there (this one loved it). Songs like "Beautiful Girl", "She Already has a Boyfriend" ("She already has a boyfriend/and I hope they break up soon") and "10 Again" are perfect examples of punk power mixed with a classic tongue in cheek sense of humor. Sleepasaurus plays like they were forced to record this album in a day, but the production and the sound here is outstanding. Longtime fans of the band will undoubtedly be impressed with the sheer intensity of this release. While the basic form of the songs here is not radically different from earlier work, the members definitely tightened up their sound and play like a more cohesive outfit. Very tight, very loud and very fast. I could not find a negative thing about this record. I loved it, and I definitely found more impressive than earlier singles. Buy this. -Rick Q.

SLICK SHOES (Tooth & Nail Records, PO Box 12698 Seattle WA 98111) I tell you the truth I didn't really want to like this band, being a prime candidate for Fat Wreck Chord's cloning machine, with their NOFX styled breaks and Face To Face melodic riffage. Not to say I'm apeshit for these California youngsters, but they do know how to take their influences, mix em' up, and make them their own. One of those CD's that's great for cranking up in the car with the windows down on a spring day. - Rick K.

SLOBBERBONE - *Crow Pot Pie* (Doolittle, Box 4700, Austin, TX 78765)- Unlike

recent embarrassments to the neo-country genre such as Ween's latest concept album, "12 Golden Country Greats," Slobberbone represents a new, growing breed of authentic American musicians. Their sound is fuel-injected, hillbilly rock 'n' roll with an attitude and their songs are cleverly-woven tales of dusty trailer-park life in rural Texas. There's a certain sense of hopelessness prevalent in these songs; "Sober Song" starts off the album with electric distortion that's a lot louder than the fiddle, and lyrics that seem to negate nearly everything in their path: "Yeah I've been drinkin'/I bet you couldn't tell/The way I'm stinkin'/As if you couldn't smell." Banjos and fiddles aside, it sounds like rock 'n' roll to me. - Dan E.

SLOE - *Careless Whispers* (Headhunter) Sloe's originals are far better than the awful Wham cover they've chosen to represent themselves with. While they're not as slick as Knapsack, or as powerful as Garden Variety, this is a pretty solid release from this poppy, emo group. The whiny vocals may take some getting use to, but fans of this genre should definitely keep their eyes on sloe. -TMF.

SLUGFEST (Initial PO Box 251145 W. Bloomfield, MI 48325) This CD was put together because these guys broke up abruptly and never recorded much. Tracks 1-4 were written a while back but recorded in 96. Tracks 5-8 are taken from the 1993 "Buried Alive" seven inch. Good hard core punk. - Den S.

SMILE - *Masterlocks + 3* (Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92815-5232) Surf music for the late 90s. There is a definite SoCal surf influence in this great mod/power-pop CD EP. The winner for lyrics on this 4 song CD has to be "Crispin Glover vs. Tom Snyder," while the overall best track would have to be the opener, "Masterlocks." Very cool disc from a band to watch. - Paul S.

JILL SOBULE - *Happy Town* (Lava/Atlantic) If you know Jill Sobule at all, it's probably from her gender-twisting novelty hit, "I Kissed A Boy." It would be easy enough to write her off as another one of those singers in the Jewel/ Juliana Hatfield school of female singer-songwriters with little girl voices and big guitars, if it were not for the quality of her songwriting. This album kicks off with a delicious tune co-written (and sung) with ex-Bongo Richard Barone. With typical Barone whimsy, it's a song called "Bitter," about surviving in the music industry and trying not to become that way, with a clanky arrangement that sounds as if it's being played on a set of children's toy instruments. Sobule strikes a more somber note on "Barren Egg," which suggests the cost of freedom is often loneliness. And I dare you not to smile as Sobule skitters thru the vicissitudes of small town life in "Happy Life." - Jim T.

SPACE - *Spiders* (Universal) Like the Borg, the U.K.'s Space finds other cultures - in this case, everything from hip hop and disco to Burt Bacharach-styled pop - and assimilates them into their own all-encompassing consciousness. Unlike the Borg, you can dance to this. - Jim T.

SPACE NEEDLE - *The Moray Eels Eat The Space Needle* (Zero Hour Records, 14 W 23 ST NYC 10010) Space Needle create songs that jettison your brain from your skull like a escape pod floating into the unknown reaches of space. Unlike the cold dark cosmos, these tunes have warm air jets of soothing soulful melodies and vocals. If you will, a mind bending mix of atmospheric spacerock ala Spacemen 3 and soulful indie-rock. Certainly one of the best and most creative bands to come out of NYC, or for that matter the universe for quite some time. (Look for cool 70's fantasy cover art by Roger Dean, best known for his work on Yes album covers.) - Rick K.

SPEEDBALL - *Drive Like Hell* (Energy Records, 545 8th Ave., 17th floor, NY,NY 10018) Like their bio says, very guitar-driven. It's a good album to drive to. Like the album title says: Drive Like Hell! Very high-energy, raw sound, along with pounding drums and bass. There are 7 songs, and the last 3 are live; those 3 are the best ones, so their shows must kick some ass! - Phil P.

SPEED DUSTER - *Quick and Painless* (Fuse) I barely made it through the first cut. The singer has some really annoying country/Cows/Hickoids thing going. The second song wasn't as bad, but unfortunately the flavor was set for things to come. Occasionally a decent guitar break comes rolling around but then its back to country bar rock. If that's your thing then so be it. - John L.

SPIDER BABIES - *Adventures In Sex & Violence* (G.I. Productions, PO Box 6948, San Jose CA 95150) Three-chords, three guys, rock and roll. Throw in the word "garage" and a fuzz box and what more do you have to know? Okay, how's this - imagine the Queens or the Riverdales without the Ramones influences. The Spider Babies play all the stuff that's left. - Jim T.

SPLENDIFEROUS MONSTER - *Ugly Up Close* (UrPop!) collegiate rock with clever lyrics. This disc strays all over the map, from a pop-punk ditty to jangle to slow and easy(er) does it. These gents are pretty silly, which is cool; but I've heard all of these riffs before, which is not (and whoever thought up the 'ten minutes of feedback' bonus track should be strapped own and forced to listen to

'Metal Machine Music' fifty fucking thousand times). Buzzbin material for kids who think Tracy Bonham is 'out there'. - Mike F.

THE SQUARES - *Squarification* (Get Hip! PO BOX 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) France has produced many great things over the years. She gave us the works of such greats as Jean-Luc Godard, Francois Truffaut, Albert Camus, Jacques Derrida and Jean Paul Sartre. Now we have a new piece of finery to add to the cabinet. Extremely lo-fi punk, in the style of Wild Billy Childish in his Headcoats mode. A lot like The Beatles if Brian Epstein hadn't taken away their pomade and their leather jackets. Fans of early Kinks should be quite happy with this one as well. And they aren't at all afraid of driftin' into the Land of Psychodelia, y'know, where Roky Erikson and Sky Saxon have taken up permanent residence. If you ask the kids what they like about this one, they'll just say "the beat, the beat, the beat." And an insidious one it is indeed. VIVE LA FRANCE!! - David B.

SQUASH - *Golden Annie* (Rive Entertainment, 245 E. 40th Street New York, New York 10016) Hailing from that rock n roll hotbed of Lancaster, PA comes a band that combines aggression, heaviness and technical brilliance into one swirling musical explosion. This six song EP, produced by Jay Sorrentino of Suddenly, Tammy! fame captures a raw, powerful sound that matches this outfit perfectly. The songs revolve around the sonic vocals of Rick Reardon who sounds like he is trying to exorcise some painful demons through his emotionally charged, highly spirited vocal delivery. Reardon's vocals soar amongst a mist of dazzling chaos. When the bands plays as a unit, the results are amazing, and this particularly true on tracks like "Credenza", "Stoma" and "Tadpole", a song written for Reardon's younger brother. The rhythm section of Roger Fitzwater(bass) and Oz Christ on drums create an immovable wall for Reardon and guitarist Dave Reimel to bounce themselves off. Christ is given ample opportunity to display his incredible combinatin of timing and power, while Fitzwater anchors the heavier aspects of each tune. Reimel is particularly dazzling, for his playing can range from experimental to ethereal to pummeling, all sounding equally effortless. I guarantee that the musical skill on display here will destroy anything that you will listen to for the rest of the year. I mean it. If you are tired of bands that have only managed to learn three chords, and want to remember when rock bands knew how to handle their instruments, get this disc. Easily one of the finest things I have heard in a long, long time. - Rich Q.

THE SQUIRRELS - *Scrapin' for Hits* (Populist Audio) Although they're from Seattle, there's no grunge to be found here. Roots of the band go back to 1981 and this comp covers 8 different releases spanning 15 years. Much like their pals in Presidents of the U.S.A., these guys want a hit. This is party music that spoofs pop music with parodies of bad 70s hits. Even the CD cover is a shot at a Beatles album. Self described as Seattle's longest running joke, but they're laughing also and enjoying it. - Tom B.

SQUIRTGUN - *Another Sunny Afternoon* (Lookout!) After the Queens, Squirtgun is easily my favorite Lookout band at the moment, with a smile-inducing sound that's more power-pop than punk pop (in other words, they owe at least as much to the Knack as to Green Day.) Songs about sunny days, drinking coffee, and girls, girls, girls (including a really cute track about fawning over Mary Ann from Gilligan's Island, with a guest appearance by Dawn Wells herself!) Ace production by studio whiz Mass Giorgini (who plays bass) gives the guitars and rich harmony vocals that extra snap, crackle, and pop. A great CD for first thing in the morning to start your day with a smile. - Jim T.

STANDING ON EARTH - *Feeltrip* (Fingerprint, PO Box 197, Merrimac MA 01860) I can remember when any self-respecting indie rock band - especially one from a college-rock enclave like Boston - would be embarrassed to let its lead singer hit so many high notes with the power & precision of SoE's Don DiLegio. Cobain's phlegmy rasp or Stipe's introverted mumble, fine... but this guy belts 'em out like an indie rock Ethel Merman. *Feeltrip* serves up any number of chances for DiLegio to stretch

his tonsils, most effectively (for my money) when his band chugs behind him with those infectious, head-bobbing wah-wah riffs. Forays into twang, strum, and croon don't push the same buttons, but any band that can write a set-closing anthem about riding the bus is okay in my book. - Jim T.

STARLIGHT CONSPIRACY - *Sounds Like A Silver Holler* (Catapult, 215A St. 6th Floor, Boston MA 02210) It's a neat equation, one I hadn't heard that much of before: take some well-played distorto racket that jumps right down yr throat and add in some lush, pretty vocals over the cacophony. The end result is very cool indeed: the music part of the disc does its best to bludgeon you into the rug while Jan's vocals shimmer and relax. The audio equivalent of bipolarity and I'll take it, thanks very much. - Mike F.

STEADFAST - *Sixteen Reasons Why* (Onefoot Records, 8440 Remington Ave. Pennsauken, NJ 08110) I could give you sixteen reasons why this CD was great but I don't have the space. Steadfast is somewhere between punk and alternative rock. The first cut pulls you into your speaker and keeps you there. I haven't taken this CD out of my stereo since I first put it in. Jon Christopher's raspy vocals blend perfectly with the rest of the band. Do yourself a favor and get this one. I can't wait to see them live. - Den S.



SQUIRTGUN

Photo by Justin Borucki

STILLSUIT - *At the Speed of Light* (TVT Records) In a nutshell, this can be described as heavy math-punk. That is, it's like math rock, with its off-kilter rhythms, but it's fast and loud like punk, and it's heavy. The vocals were a little out of place, though, sounding like something straight out of a straight edge hardcore band (i.e. shouted). This kind of grew on me. - Paul S.

STRICKEN FOR CATHERINE - *On the Sark* (Broken Fall Records 30 New York St. Apt. #4 Dover, NH 03820) In a world with so much disposable music, a disc like this really sticks out. The four members of this Massachusetts band create a five song soundscape that takes the listener to various places all over the musical map. Stricken for Catherine express raw emotion through songs that average eight minutes in length, yet are passionate and sensitive in their delivery. Musically, the band has a dynamic range, stretching their songs from atmospheric headspace moodiness in which beautifully constructed harmonies float across a tranquil

landscape, to soaring, raw guitar heaviness. Somehow, the band makes these transitions and tempo changes seem flawless. They perform their music with a jazz mentality, changing time structure at the last second, and doing so with amazing ease. They would be a band definitely worth seeing live, for their songs leave room for improvisation and interpretation. Each track seems to be divided into sections, with each section having its own identity. This self-release, which was recorded in a scant two days, is a fabulous example of a young band aching to break away from the mainstream and truly create intelligent, stimulating music. They must be heard. - Rich Q.

THE STRIKE - *A Conscience Left to Struggle With Pockets Full Of Rust* (Johanns Face Records) - I first fell in love with this band from their split with Dillinger Four. So, when Jim sent me this full length, I knew I was in for a treat. The Strike are most definitely intelligent. What I mean is they don't fuck around. Solid melodic punk song writing with highly social and political lyrics/messages. "Where did we go wrong so that the callous and dumb get so much attention?" This record rocks! - Dave T.

SUBMINUTE:RADIO (Y Records, P.O. Box 20241, Seattle WA 98102) This band suffers from Silverchair syndrome: cute-boys who play rock. Ooh, how commercially viable! Can you say Menudo? Not even having Mary Lou Lord singing back up vocals justifies the fact that this was ever recorded. -John R.

SURFIN' LUNGS - *Hang Loose with the Surfin' Lungs* (No Tomorrow) I am still not certain if this disc is supposed to be as corny as it sounds. These guys are signed to a label from Spain, and they are a surf band from England. The Surfin' Lungs imitate, occasionally quite well, early 60's surf music. This is no where near the raw surf sounds of bands such as Man or Astroman? or the Bomboras, for the Surfin' Lungs songs are ridiculously poppy, sugary and extremely cute. Like all good surf bands, the Lungs have only sun, waves and girls on their collective minds, as songs like "Beach Bound", "Another Summer, Another Girl", and "Born to the Beach" prove. At their best, the Lungs capture some of the innocence and fun of bands like the Surfaries and Jan and Dean. At their worst, they are pitiful grade-B lounge music. Either way, you'll come out smiling. - Rich Q.

SUSPECTS - *New Dawn in the 21st Century* (Torque Records, PO Box 229 Arlington, VA 22210) Another good full length from this budding DC area punk band. Ex Screem drummer Kent Stax stays true to his roots as the rest of the band pounds away! Politically charged punk and hardcore that proves not everyone in DC is jaded or has outgrown punk rock. I'm already waiting for their next release, but I'm still curious why a band like this doesn't release vinyl. - John L.

SWEET VINE - (Columbia Records) I think this kind of music used to be called "Southern rock" back in the 1970s. You know, bands like the Allman Brothers and the Doobie Brothers. Really annoying country-inspired rock music, complete with twangy hooks and guitar solos. Think "Sweet Home Alabama" and you'll have a perfect idea of what this sounds like. - Paul S.

SWELL - *Too Many Days Without Thinking* (Beggars Banquet) Well right off the bat these guys have two good things that are worth a million to any music critic: they avoid the standard promotional propaganda by wrapping it up themselves in a nifty little fanzine, and they have a song titled, "Fuck Even Flow." Once the disc gets spinning you'll find out that this fourth release by those Swell guys is a well rounded, easy going pop album worth it's weight in mercury. There's a certain apathetic flavor to Swell's music that makes big smiles. Not a hostile, angst ridden apathy but a contented, determined grin of carelessness. Swell convey their desires in lines like, 'What I always wanted/I'm failing to come down', and the alternating, dreaming and driving pop hooks testify on behalf of the lyrics. When that 'fuck-it' switch in the back of your head gets thrown, give these guys a turn. Beats collecting guns. - Greg M.

THE TENDER IDOLS - *The Tender Idols* (4060 Morgan Road, Atlanta GA 30084) Given the current climate where Brit-pop is hot shit, it's a mystery, really, why The Tender Idols haven't been signed by *somebody*. While bands like Oasis, Pulp and Blur are battling it out over record sales and radio airplay with a musical schtick that derives more from sixties-era American garage rock than recent English dance pop, The Tender Idols are writing the licks today that the brothers Gallagher will be copying tomorrow. As illustrated by their self-produced, self-titled debut disk, this Atlanta foursome have the sound nailed down, mixing garage rock ethics with Beatlesque tuneage to create a sort of tasty boiling mutant pop/rock stew. - Reverend K.

THEY EAT THEIR YOUNG - *Last Supper* (1569 Montgomery Ave., Pittsburgh PA 19125) Solid, well-produced rock and roll, reminiscent of foursquare bar bands of yesteryear like the Iron City House Rockers.

Smarter, better-written, and more ambitious than typical frat-rock fodder, although the gestalt is definitely more heartland than Avenue A. - Jim T.

THINGY - *Staring Contest* (Headhunter) Ex-members of Heavy Vegetable return. There are seven full sounding acoustic tracks, with beautiful male/female vocal harmonies, on this release. Plenty of odd time changes keep it interesting. The short song lengths (13 min. total) left me smiling and wanting more. -TMF.

THRALL - *Chemical Wedding* (Alternative Tentacles) Former vocalist of God Bullies Mike Hard fronts this odd mixture of industrial grind, hard rock, and post-apocalyptic social commentary. Dark and incredibly honest to the present-day state of the world, Thrall points out all our brave new morals. You know the ones -- the ones we spend our lives avoiding their full implications. On *Chemical Wedding*, desensitization is painted from the inside out, religious doctrines are stripped and caught red-handed, and the sickening regularity of uncontrollable greed is measured in full bloom. As far as the musical genre goes, admirers of heavy, crunching guitar and lovers of the gothic vocal flair will feel most at home. At times, however, a Jesus Lizard comparison is easy to make. Satirical, Gripping, bleak, and painfully honest. . . a double anxiety with a side of your own medicine, modern man. - Greg M.



STANDING ON EARTH

THREE TO SIX INCHES - *As Long As I Don't* (PO Box 1358, Highland Park, NJ 08904-1358, e-mail woodley@rci.rutgers.edu) I can't say enough for these guys...they're not godless rich kids, they're regular people and they've earned everything they have. They have a great sound and wonderful presence and I think (I hope) they're starting to get a little recognition. See them now, or you'll end up seeing them surrounded by a sea of pre-teens at Roseland. Now is better. They have a driving, gritty sound (Lisa Woodley's vocals rule) that will appeal to punk fans of all ages, but they're all good enough players and the lyrics are complex enough that even old

the quality is really good. Their songs are all band originals (they write them as a group) and though it's hard to match the power of seeing them live, the CD really captures their sound. Also, for more info on Three To Six Inches, check out the Brunfest Website at <http://www.brunsfest.com/music/326.html> which has an interview with the band. - Leah B.

THRUSH HERMIT - *Sweet Homewrecker* (Elektra Entertainment) I can't tell if this band is trying to be "alternative" or not. For the most part, the music is pretty ordinary rock and roll, kind of in the classic rock vein. Once in awhile there's a hook or something that makes it sound like their trying to be an alternative band, but they sound even less alternative than Pearl Jam. And the vocalist sounds kinda goofy, too. - Paul S.

THUMBNAIL - *Red! Dead!* (Headhunter/Cargo) Thumbnail doesn't have a typical San Diego / Headhunter sound. They remind me a lot of an emo band turned crunchy mathrock. A couple of songs are much smoother, though, with "An Anthem to Everything" having a very C-Clamp or The For Carnation kind of quiet minimalist mathrock sound. "Electrycznel" is a manic depressive tune which moves from intense to calm, from dissonant to melodic. Cool stuff that's worth a listen. - Paul S.

TRICK BABYS - *A Fool and his Money will be Partying* (Go Kart Records) Billing themselves as "pumprock", these Brooklyn natives mix glamour and the gutter. Fronted by the good pipes of ex-Da Willys Lynne Von and 2 ex-Vacant Lot members, they combine R&B meets NY Dolls greaser influences with soul. Too R&B and not enough gutter for my tastes. - Tom B.

TRIPFACE - *Some Part Sorrow* (Exit Records PO Box 263 New York, NY 10012) Tripface is a young New York band that is breathing fresh life into hardcore. "Some Part Sorrow" is a dazzling collection of songs that feature power, indefinable volume and a positive message of acceptance. I especially enjoyed this disc, for while this band is straight-edge, they are not condemning those of us who are not. The band is a roaring tank of a musical experience with each sound sounding crisp and heavy. The musicianship here is superior to most of the hardcore out there, and singer Scott Jarzombek's emotional and raw vocals force the listener to pay attention to what he is saying. They also prove that hardcore kids can have a sense of humor by doing a hilarious cover of Twisted Sister's immortal classic, "I Wanna Rock". "Some Part Sorrow" is an impressive first full length release for a band that will definitely be around for a long time to come, and should be one of the leaders in not only New York hardcore, but around the country as well. - Rich Q.

TRICKY THE COSMONAUT (Opulence) Tricky The Cosmonaut's low-fi jangle and twang has made them one of Wilmington, NC's most beloved bands. While most of the trio's songs veer toward silly, almost juvenile pop tunes set to bouncy, ineffably catchy melodies, these guys can still come up with some quirky little riff that will stick in your noggin for days, or turn a phrase (like the line in "New York" where the protagonist sings he "looked at Ellis Island with a teardrop in my eye") that will melt your heart. The live-in-a-closet production values can be annoying (especially when the drums overpower everything else in the mix,) but put these mooks in a real studio some day and you might just be looking at the next Weezer. - Jim T.

THE TROPICALS - *Live At The Jungle* (TRG Records, 2217 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis MN 55404) The duo of Peter Lawton and Craig Wright are The Tropicals, an offbeat, quirky, slightly off-kilter singer/songwriter team that have managed to build quite a following during their half-decade of performing. Strangely enough, however, *Live At The Jungle* is their first album, a delightful collection of original songs from a pair of true musical originals. At first they sound like the amateurish bastard offspring of Jonathan Richman. With further spins of the disk, however, one finds that whatever Lawton and Wright lack in vocal talents they more than make up for with wit and humour, lyrical insight and poetic skills. Writing with great joy and exuberance about the world around them, the twenty songs caught live during this spirited 1995 performance showcase a pair of innocents who have yet to lose their sense of wonder about their art. That in itself makes The Tropicals and *Live At The Jungle* well worth listening to. - ReverendK

TURBO AC'S - *Damnation Overdrive* (Blackout! Records 253 Camberwell New Road, London SE5 0TH, England) This is what you call one of those albums with a theme. I don't know if it's just the name but listening to them reminded me of being in a car. Trouble is, the singer has a voice that sounds like he's the scruffy-guy-that's-into-cars type. The vocals turned me off and to tell you the truth a lot of the songs sound the same and are overall too trite for my ear. - Eva S.

UFOFU (The Medicine Label, 137 West 14th Street, Suite 202, NY, NY 10011) At first they kinda reminded me of Everclear. After giving them a good listen this rawkin pop/ punk band adds a 50's style funky bass line, keyboards and even horns at one point. They have have a definitely unique sound that gets kinda repetitive on certain songs but is overall pretty good. - Eva S.

V.REVERSE - *Children's Basic Concepts Through Music* (Underdog Records 2206 N. Rockwell St. Chicago IL 60647) The longest song on this 10" release is only 2:41, nearly a full minute longer than the second longest track. When the songs are this short, this record seems to finish almost before it starts. V.Reverse plays energized guitar fueled punk that you have heard before, but they keep it entertaining. The songs are brief, yet packed with emotion and are well put together. Unfortunately, the band does not give you much of an opportunity to show off their talent for very long. Overall, while V.Reverse are not shattering any new ground, they have the potential to grow into a great band. - Rich Q.

The **VAN PELT** - *Sultans Of Sentiment* (Gern Blandsten) Whispers of post-adolescent wet dreams set to undulating waves of emo-core. Guaranteed to either mesmerize or annoy the hell out of you. - Jim T.

THE VINDICTIVES - *Party Time For Assholes* (V.M.L.) I heard they broke up. I hope so. - Dave T.

WEEZER - *Pinkerton* (DGC) - Yeah, so it's on a major, but fuck, this is one great album. I really don't give a shit what you think about the whole indie mixing with major ordeal but this band just keeps dishing out the sweetest tunes ever to hit your ear. The melodies, harmonies, song structure, arrangements, ahhh.. everything's just so right. - Dave B.

WILCO - *Being There* (Reprise) - Up till now we haven't been able to hear a thing about Wilco without also getting an earful of Uncle Tupelo trivia, the now immortalized country-rock act that many claimed spawned the alternative-country revolution. Hopefully "Being There" will put an end to all that; songs like "Monday" and "Hotel Arizona" are more MTV than TNN, and the obvious radio-friendly single "Outta Site (Outta Mind)" works more like a pop masterpiece than any of the Gram Parson-esque hillbilly jams that made them famous. According to front man Jeff Tweedy, Wilco tried to convince Reprise not to promote "Being There" as a country album at all, but rather as a simple, home-grown rock 'n roll record. With the exception of "Forget the Flowers," "Far, Far Away," and "Someday Soon," none of the songs on this two-CD set even hint at a country influence. "Was I In Your Dreams" and "Why Would You Wanna Live," the undisputed champs of this album, beg to be played again and again and make me feel quite confident that they'd sound just as good shouted in a sports arena as they would in a tiny dive bar on the seedy side of town. I wish the best of luck to a very different, yet very talented Wilco, no matter how much they choose to charge for tickets. - Dan E.

WILCO - *Being There* (Reprise) I find it real hard to know what to say about this album. I think it's a great album, but herein lies the rub. It would be a AMAZING album had I never heard Big Star or The Replacements, but here I'm being a bit redundant. As it stands, this album is the best Big Star album that Big Star never recorded. Vocalist Jeff Tweedy freely dips into the Alex Chilton Pool Of Emoting more than once. The production even has that old Ardent Studios feel. Is this a bad thing? No. I love Big Star. I just was expecting a little more, especially after AM. And this record has it's share of moments, or I wouldn't continue to put it on again and again. And I will admit that it grows on me more and more each time I listen to it. This is a very enjoyable record, but the comparisons are impossible to avoid. It just reeks of Eau de Big Star. But I would have to recommend it highly. - David B.

WILD COLONIALS - *This Can't Be Life* (Geffen) A marvelous disc which is difficult to describe. Vocalist Angela McCluskey has a compelling voice which shimmers and vibes and drills the listener with sounds ranging from sweet and melodic to wild and fanciful. Rickie Lee Jones makes a guest appearance on one tune and seems almost to not be there, perhaps deliberately. The 4 guys of the band and the other 9 guests all contribute many things to a fine release. - Rodney L.

WOOKIE - *Blast Shield Down* (Bear Records, J.A.F. Box 444, New York, NY, 10116-0444) More juvenile, strum-happy pap with weird sound effects, nerdy vocals, and mediocre sci-fi lyrics--this shit sucks. We can only hope that Wookies really do tear people's arms from their sockets--then maybe we could find one and sic it on these guys. - Michael C.



XANAX25 - *Sweet Vermouth* (Paradigm Records) Vocalist and song writer Jaik Miller has a voice which infuses whatever space it throbs into with energy. Sort of dark but powerful. The band is also good. Two song EP from a band which has been together for more than 2 years. Plus a cover of "Jane Says" by Jane's Addiction, which might be the best song on here. - Rodney L.

COMPILATIONS

A PUNK WISH (Possible Problem, PO Box 59854, Potomac MD 20859-9854) Although I'm sure they mean well by putting out a CD like this that benefits a very worthy cause (Make a Wish Foundation), the songs are either previously released or throw away material. This provides as more of a budget sampler than a good punk comp. F.Y.P., Rhythm Collision, White Kaps, NUFAN, are featured among quite a few up and coming bands. They should see some proceeds since its apparent that they haven't spent much on the packaging or mastering. Side note: there are also way too many NOFX clones on this CD. - John L.

BACK TO THE PSYCHIATRIST WE GO (Ripped Records, 1200 Georgetown Circle, Carlisle PA 17013) There are a gazillion seven inches these days...it's both a cool and dangerous idea for four bands to split a CD. The listener winds up with more band for his or her buck, yeah, but having three good songs and five or six mediocre ones on a CD, for example, is going to leave a hell of a lot less of an impression on a listener than one or two completely kickass songs on a split seven inch. The first band here, the Resurgents, have two wonderful songs in "Bank Teller Girl" and "Nancy is a Know-It-All", the latter of which reminds me of the A.G's....always a bonus. The rest of the stuff cops heavily from the Queers and Screeching Weasel. You decide whether that's good or bad. Shower With Goats are less poppy than the Resurgents, but still take the liberty of biting Johnny Jughead-esque leads from time to time. A few of the songs ("Forever Yours", for one) were difficult to listen to because of the band's apparent inattention to tuning. Eight SWG songs more than sufficed here. Skam Impaired started off with "Stephanie's Assumption", with its rad trumpet-as-backing-vocal thing and tight arrangements. After that, a bunch of ska stuff that sounded exactly the same (except for when they stepped on the distortion pedal....in which case it sounded exactly the same but distorted) and one more punk song, "Back Off", which was cool.

THE VAN PELT

The Wastrels were the rawest, realest band of the bunch. No frills here, pal, just plenty of fun, stupid songs about girls and gum. Nothing like a good, rousing "Oi Oi Oi!" to make life livable, I tell you. I guess I think that a lot of these songs just fill space, and that if the band had been more selective, this could've been one hell of a split single. Instead, I was forced to wade thru the mediocrity to find the good stuff.... - Mike F.

COME AND GET IT: A Tribute To Badfinger (Copper, 8208 Westpark #104, Houston TX 77063) I doubt many people under the age of 35 even know who Badfinger were, and the geezers who do remember the group probably won't recognize more than two or three cuts from this compilation. (For the record, Badfinger were signed to the Beatles' Apple Records and had their biggest hit with a Paul McCartney composition which they managed to make sound exactly as if Paul himself were performing it.) So what's the point? The point is the roster of power-pop legends who turn up on this disc - the Knack, 20/20, the Plimsouls, and Dwight Twilley, plus classic-rock geezers like Adrian Belew and Al Kooper. Listen, ids, if you think Bis invented cute-pop, you owe it to yourself to get a taste of the real thing. - Jim T.

CURRENT 93 HALLOWEEN US APPEARANCE CD (Durtro / World Serpent) This CD doesn't really have a title, but was released in limited quantities to celebrate the appearance of Current 93 in New York City for the first (and likely only) time for a show on Halloween, 1996. This CD contains five tracks, one each from Nature and Organisation, Tiny Tim, and Nurse With Wound and two from Current 93. Tiny Tim was due to have played the Halloween show, but was recovering from his September heart attack and had to cancel. The Nature and Organisation and Current 93 tracks are pretty much what you would expect -- the so-called "Apocalyptic Folk" of the World Serpent crowd. The N&O track is exclusive to this CD, and is very nice cover of a Rod McKuen/Jacques Brel song. The C93 tracks are the original, quieter, acoustic recording of songs from the "Lucifer Over London" LP of a few years ago, and are some of the better of the recent C93 acoustic cuts. The Tiny Tim track is a poor quality recording made of a song sung on an overseas phone call of a Morton Downey song from 1928, and is most valuable as what is likely his last recorded song. Finally, the Nurse With Wound track is a much too short collage of interesting sounds, in the traditional NWW vein. It's very unlike the recent "Two Golden Microphones" type work Steven has been doing lately, and is kind of a welcome change. - Paul S.

DON'T ATTEMPT TO MAKE AN EFFORT (King Records, 20 Westminster Rd., Chatham NJ 07928) Wow, over 30 slices of hyper-adrenalized pop-punk for four bucks! You can't beat that. Most of these bands are unknown, although there are strong tracks from Doc Hopper and Moral Crux. The real fun is getting a taste of all these young bands with cool names, snotty vocals, catchy tunes, and energy to burn: This Side Up, Nothing Yet, Angered Youth (great name!), Junior, Sticker, and Big Wig were my faves. You almost have to listen to this a little bit at a time - sitting through all 33 tracks at once slams the ol' cerebral cortex like chugging a quart of Jolt Cola. - Jim T.

GO KART VS. THE CORPORATE GIANT (Go-Kart Records PO Box 20 Prince Street Station New York NY 10012) Go-Kart records uses this compilation to show the world and all unconverted why they are one of the coolest labels in the world. My life was changed forever when, as a dorky college radio guy, a cd from some band called Berserk fell into my hands. I've dug most of the stuff that Go-Kart has done since then, and this is kind of a greatest hits for the label. Along with two Berserk tracks, you also get great material from Lunachicks, the Wives, Trick Babys, Buttsteak and the legenday Canned Travolta, which was a joke band formed to open for the Village People at NYU. You are treated to their version of the Brady Bunch's "Time to Change" which features the Cowboy from the Village People playing the role of Greg. (Their 7" also features an amzing rendition of Donna Summer's "Hot Stuff"-mandatory if you can find it!) Go-Kart always releases music from bands who could rock, but did so with a smile on their faces. This is proven by the inclusion of Black Velvet Flag's "I Shot JFK". Twenty-eight songs in total, and it's the most fun you'll have listening to a compilation. There is a nice mix of known and unreleased tracks, too. Very cool. - Rich Q.

HEADZ2a and HEADZ2b (Mo'Wax Recordings, PO Box 9331, London N1 OTQ, England) A massive, two part compilation of the Mo'Wax sound. This compilation is spread out over either four CDs or eight LPs and has been released in two parts (a and b) in two packaging styles (limited edition gatefold box or regular cardboard envelope). The Mo'Wax sound is best described as being ambient music with a hip-hop attitude. Artists such as DJ Wally, The Dust Brothers, Urban Tribe, and the much lauded DJ Shadow make appearances. Also included are appearances by The Beastie Boys, The Jungle Brothers and Tortoise. This is the music to chill to. Cerebral in the ambient tradition, but with cool, laid back hip-hop rhythm, sampling, and scratching. Some of the cuts are pretty acid jazz laden, as well. Headz2 represents the funkier side of this musical scene, as opposed to the more experimental side known as "illbient." It's probably the most comprehensive sampler of the genre, and is well worth the steep import price. - Paul S.

HYPE: The Motion Picture Soundtrack (Sub Pop) I reckon this is only a sort-of soundtrack and really more of an attempt at a historical compilation of the Seattle grunge-rock era. There's live or unreleased stuff from Green River, Fastbacks, Mudhoney, Supersuckers, and Pearl Jam, as well as previously released songs from Nirvana, Tad, and Soundgarden. All of this is supposed to be the soundtrack to a documentary film on the Seattle scene, but even the liner notes admit that liberties were taken in including songs that aren't in the movie. If you haven't already overdosed on this sound, it's probably something to pick up. Me, I'll just go see the movie. - Johnny P.

I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT (Mountain Records, Po Box 220320, Greenpoint Post Office Brooklyn, New York 11222-9997) This compilation has been released solely to raise money for grassroots anti-capital punishment campaigns. Regardless of your feelings on this highly emotional issue, the music here is incredible in its brutality and honesty. Thirteen explosive tracks of scathing hardcore, thrash and noise. The majority of these bands are relatively unknown and hungry, and their raw energy shines through, particularly on tracks from Botch, Amber Inn, the nearly eight-minute epic from Breakwater, Bor and In/Humanity. If you support the full elimination of the death penalty, this record comes equipped with ideas, contacts and suggestions on how you can raise awareness in your area. If you want to contribute to the cause, it will not cost you a cent. Write to the address above and ask them about their available materials. They'll help you from there. However, rest assured that this album is not preaching at you. This is an organization trying to stir up action and the spreading of ideas through music. The final gem on this comp is a remarkable spoken word, somewhat experimental piece that closes the record on a haunting and unforgettable note. - Rich Q.

LEFT FOR DEAD (Chumpire, Po Box 680, Conneaut Lake PA 16316) This very DIY compilation gives you a wide variety of Pennsylvania punk from both the Eastern and Western parts of the state, featuring 19 songs from 18 young bands. While not all of the material on this comp works, there are far more hits than misses. Your listening experience will vary depending at

which end of the state you start with. I suggest starting east and heading west. The Eastern side features great tracks from Strych Nine and the Rat Traps (a winner for song and name), Bomb Squadron and Grieving Euca-lyptus, all of which provide exciting punk with varied emotions and levels of fury. Not to be outdone, the western side has a handful of impressive songs from acts like the brutal sounds of Chase Squad, the more mainstream and instantly catchy Not Your Friends, and the most disturbing track on the compilation, an anti-domestic violence song by the Molliés. Having only heard of a couple of these bands prior to the record, I was pretty impressed with what I found. Some of it is scathing hardcore, some stuff is poppy, and then there is other material that just does not work. In the end, it's a comp worth picking up, for there is some cool unknown talent here. - Rich Q.

LIVE FROM THE MASQUE - 3-CDs (Year One, 207 Ashland Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90405) An incredible document of one of American punk's first scenes. Featuring LA pioneers such as X, THE GERMS, THE DICKIES, and lesser knowns THE WEIRDOS, THE BAGS, F-WORD, and THE ALLEYCATS among others, it captures a two-day show at the Elks Lodge (now the Park Plaza Hotel) in 1978 raising cash for the Masque's legal troubles and recorded by GEZA X. The performances impeccably capture the energy of the moment and the recording quality is surprisingly good (unbelievable for sitting in a box for 17 years). The liner notes are extensive with plenty of photos and the musical highlights are too plentiful to mention. Bands you've never heard of will impress you, while faves like X and The Germs win renewed respect. If you love the music, you'll berate your local music shop jockey into ordering several copies. A fine addition to any punk collection. - Chris Parker

NOTHING IN COMMON (Casual Tonalities, 2534 S. Pleasant Ave. Ontario Canada 91761) So Todd, my upstairs neighbor, came down to check out my big slew o' stuff to review. In an incredible stretch of bad luck, we happened to listen to no less than five terrible CD's and 7"s in a row. We saved the various for last, reasoning that there would be, at the very least, one or two mind-blowing tracks. Seventeen songs....at least one's gotta be great. Right? ...Uh, no. With the exception of the first track, an ethereal, pretty synth-drum ditty by Eenie Meenie, we quickly found that the other sixteen bands on this disc bored us to tears. Sure, there are a lot of styles represented here (hence the name of the comp), but none of 'em (with the possible exception of Ms. Meenie) are anything to write home about. Unless, of course, you're writing home to comment that, thru a shared blandness, the bands do indeed have something in common. Otherwise, save yr stamp. - Mike F.

NO DIRECTION: A 42 Records Compilation (42 Records PO Box 983 Levittown, PA. 19057) 10 Bands, 23 songs. Over 63 minutes of diverse music. This comp has a little of everything. Hard core, punk, power pop, ska and even some funny dude with a ukulele. Included are The Gadgets, Senator Joe, The Automatics, The Velvetones, Load, Chickpea, Floz, The Reeky Shanks, The Yokels, and the Oliver Brown Trio (ukulele guy). The two best songs are by Load. There are 12 unreleased tracks included. Not a bad choice if you want different types of music on one CD. - Den S

NOTHING'S QUIET ON THE EASTERN FRONT (Reservoir Records PO Box 790366 Middle Village NY 11379-0366) This release is an incredible compilation that marks the state of East Coast Hardcore. If this comp is any indication, East Coast Hardcore is alive, well and brutal. This one is not for the faint of heart or fans of punk-pop. Each band unleashes a relentless assault on the listener, pummeling you until the next track begins. Some of the bands here border on thrash, particularly the nearly indescribable Brutal Truth. There is not one wasted second here and the line up is impressive. This is a compilation that has the potential to rank with some of the best hardcore comps of the past. This is because you are given a taste of a wide array of hardcore energy which sums up where the scene is right now. C.R., Devoid of Faith, Suppression and Dropdead were my personal favorites, but the entire record is amazing. Buy this or be left out. - Rich Q.

ONE BIG HAPPY SLAP PIT (Spider Club Music Po Box 95365 Seattle Washington 98145-2365) This is an exhausting, fast paced compilation featuring twenty-seven killer tracks, with only two clocking in at over three minutes. This is blistering punk, but it is not mindless. Instead, *One Big Happy Slam Pit* focuses on bands that have messages ranging from questioning leadership to suicide, all played raw and driven. There are too many worthwhile songs to list here, but the ones that stood out for me included the offerings from Drunk in Public, Litmus Green, The Freeze, Useless Intent and the hilarious "Pink Power Ranger" tune from Bickley. There is no let up at all during this comp and the songs flow easily into one another. This is definitely worth picking up, for it exposes relatively unknown acts from various regions across the country. You are bound to find a new band to get excited about after listening to this one. - Rich Q.

PEACE/WAR (New Red Archives PO Box 210501 San Francisco California, 94121) Sixty, count 'em sixty(!) bands comprise this pummeling compilation dedicated to the exposing the dangers of nuclear energy, weapons and war. This must have been a huge undertaking for the roster of bands on this two disc set range from Reagan Youth, Dead Kennedys and UK Subs to very recent Anti-Flag. There is also a nice mix of American and international acts, with bands checking in from Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy, the UK and even South Africa. The compilation plays well and does not grow tiresome for the pacing is excellent. The listener gets a sample of what hardcore was like and where it is going. The line-up covers a great deal of hard core history, and the bands attack the subjects of war and nuclear power with different styles and levels of brutality. This is highly recommended. The issue behind this comp is commendable, but it will also help you remember some classic bands as well as discovering some new ones. This has to be heard to be believed. -Rich Q.

PUNK DWELLINGS - NY'S FINEST VOL. 1 (Dwell Records, POB 183, Woodbury, NY 11797) A novel concept - twelve NY area bands do one original and one cover song of their choice. The covers for the most part lean toward punk classics, such as Snuka doing "Orgasm Addict" and The Wretched Ones doing "Lipstick on Your Collar." I'm not a big fan of covers, but this was cooler than most and there were not any that really sucked. Electric Frankenstein and US Chaos provided particularly strong tracks. A look back and a look into the future of the current scene. Also includes tracks from YellowScab, Latex Generation, The Wives, & others. - Tom B.

PUNK O RAMA Vol. 2 (Epitaph) A pretty excellent selection of tunes from Epitaph releases past and present. I was particularly into the Poison Idea and T.S.O.L. stuff which proved a pleasant blast from the past. Vol. 2 serves another good party compilation as it races through 17 high energy cuts with little or no deviation from the formula. A lot of old faves and newer bands make it difficult to tear yourself away from this one. Not much diversity here, but I don't think that diversity was the intention. - John L.

SUBJECTIVE OBJECTIVE: A Parabola Records Sampler (PO Box 16353, Jacksonville FL 32245) The highlights are the five tracks from NJ's Blisters, reviewed here previously as a demo tape. The Proletariats contribute four cuts, two of them snappy ska-punk tunes, Nullset and He Himself add a taste of electronica, and the overproduced Smartmouth ends things up with overripe alt.rock. Do yourself a favor and write the Blisters at 30 Carson Ave., Metuchen NJ 08840 and ask for a copy of the demo tape. -

SUPERWINNERS SUMMER ROCK ACADEMY (St. Francis Records, PO Box 95587 Seattle, WA 98145) This comp is a collection of songs taken from many wonderful indie-rock bands who played a four day festival in Chico, California in the summer of '95. There are 27 bands on the disc, including some known quantities such as Knapsack, SF Seals, and Baboon, as well as some great unknown bands such as Track Star, the Imps, Death Star, and Flaming Box Of Ants, just to name a few. This comp unlike many comps has a real "feel" (an extremely fun one I might add) to it and consistency all the way through. The only thing that bums me out about it is that I wasn't there, it was probably a blast. - Rick K.

THINK LINK! (Drink N Drive Records, PO BOX 771101 Lakewood, OH 44107) Here's a hot little number courtesy of Drink N Drive records- a 10 inch multi-band tribute to the inimitable (though many try) Link Wray. Featuring the likes of The Galaxy Trio, The Cowslingers, Mono Men, The Volcanos, Thee Headcoat Sect, Forbidden Dimension, Thee Phantom Five and Impala performing some of Link's classic scorchers and cookers. Great compilation. Make sure to send your love offering to the good folks at Drink N Drive. You'll be awfully glad you did. - David B.

VIOLENT WORLD: A Tribute To The Misfits (Caroline) Another tribute album? Well, at least the Misfits had a lot of cool songs, and it is a hoot hearing your old favorites like "20 Eyes" and "Last Caress" being done by the likes of Shades Apart and No FX. (Further proof, alas, that Shades Apart are always infinitely more fun when they're doing covers.) Pennywise sounds like they were born to do "Astro Zombies," while Prong's "London Dungeon" provides the missing link between the Misfits and Nine Inch Nails that we always knew was there. - Jim T.

THE WORLD STILL WON'T LISTEN - A Tribute to the Smiths (Too Damn Hype Records) 18 bands that you would least expect cover tunes by the Smiths. There's several tracks from heavy, hardcore, and straight-edge bands such as Dare to Defy, Slapshot, Leeway, Vision, and Edgewise. Of special mention are Down By Law's version of "London," The Meatmen's new twist on "How Soon is Now," H2O's great pop-punk rendition of "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now," an incredible old-school hardcore version of "Stop Me if You Think You've Heard This One Before" by Vision, and Lament's beautiful recording of "Back to the Old House." While I am generally not a big fan of tribute albums, this one is well done and offers fresh perspectives on some great tunes. - Paul S.



U.S. CHAOS

Photo by Matt Brown

EDITOR'S CHOICE

FLIPSIDE has been around so long that it's easy to take it for granted, but that would be a big mistake - even after twenty years and more than 100 issues, it's still about the best all-inclusive rock 'n' roll fanzine on the planet. The fun starts with Flipside's top-notch staff of veteran scenesters, who keep readers plugged into the latest in loudness with scene reports from up and down the California coast. But that's only the beginning: Every issue crams in an average of 25 interviews, scads of live band photos, and an encyclopedic array of concert, zine, and record reviews, with a wide-open editorial policy that defines "punk" as anything from screaming Japanese noise bands to foot-stompin' Sixties garage-rock. Brainiac, the Descendents, Down By Law, Less Than Jake, and the recently reunited Rutles turn up in issue #105, but any issue of Flipside guarantees at least a few bands you already love, and a few new ones you'll be eager to check out. (PO Box 60790, Pasadena CA 91116; email: flipside@ix.netcom.com) - Jim Testa

Zine reviews are by Jim Testa unless otherwise noted. Prices indicate suggested postpaid ordering price, where available.

AMORPHOUS #3 (Jeff, 44 Woodcrest Ave., Short Hills NJ 07078 - \$1) Formerly known as Outlet. A rudimentary photocopied punkzine (I'm guessing the editor is pretty young), not much to look out but the interviews were actually pretty good. Chris of NJ's Faction Zero reports that the NJ HC scene is alive and doing well (nice to hear someone who isn't whining about how impossible it is to get a show.) Dr. Raju introduces us to Aussie ska, an interview with someone filming a documentary on NY hardcore, and reviews of movies and records.

ANEURYSM #9 (3 Kendal Ct., Marlton NJ 08053, \$2) This looks like any one of a dozen MRR/Punk Planet-inspired punkzines with columns, interviews, reviews, photos, etc. but it's still pretty well done, especially the interviews with Instl (NJ/HC) and Lifetime.

CARBON 14 #9 (\$4 from PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125) A big budget endeavor - 84 pages of glossy paper with color. Covers a wide range such as Jayne County, Richard Kern (filmmaker/porno photographer), Andrea Juno(RE/Search), Survival Research Labs, porno starlet Tiffany Million, fiction, poetry and the usual reviews. This is well done and the subject matter interesting enough that I read all of it - even topics I might normally skip over. Included in the price is a BP w/ Six Finger Satellite, MX-80, Gone & Stinking Lizavetta.-Tom B.

CHAIRS MISSING #22 (Dot Dash) (PO Box 522, Stratford CT 06497; \$2.50) It's been a while since Scott Munroe has published an issue so it was nice to see CM in my mailbox. This issue has interviews with Pansy Division, Down By Law, Showcase Show-down, the seemingly ubiquitous Sicko, and Connecticut's Creature Did, as well as Scott's peripatetic reviews. You don't read this for the graphics or layout (which frankly have always sucked); you read it for the writing, which has always been first-rate.

CHINESE BOB #3 (PO Box 500233, San Antonio TX 78280; email mrcrash@aol.com - \$2) A good half-size punk zine with stories

about the travails of being a punk kid, along with an interview with Lookout's Larry Livermore, in which he gives his side of the Screeching Weasel story.

CHORD #10 (PO Box 1520, New York NY 10009; email toodhype@aol.com - \$4.95) Formerly All That. Big ambitious punk, hc, and metal zine. This debut issue comes with a compilation CD crammed with tracks by cool bands (including the Descendents, 108, Candiria, and Serpico.) Feature stories include Rollins, Descendents, Social D, Jawbox, D Generation, and lots more; 311 gets "The Big Dis," getting drunk with the Rev. Horton Heat, and tons more. A worthwhile investment of your time & money.

CHUNKLET #11 (\$5 from Henry Owings, POE 2814, Athens, GA 30612) Not just a zine - a lifestyle guide with articles on phone pranks, Mr. YoYo, tips on how to be annoying, firewalking, a mormon guide on avoiding masturbation. In addition to the usual show and band reviews, included is an interview with former X-Ray Spex singer Poly Styrene and a Don Caballero 7".

- Tom B.



CRAZY RHYTHMS #1/2 (Jesse Fuchs, PO Box 9146, Denver CO 80209 - \$1 for #1, \$1.50 for #2) Jesse also does Geekcore zine and writes for SOMA, but this project is dedicated to reviewing his favorite all-time records - sort of a DIY Trouser Press Guide. Or as Jesse puts it, "chronicling the history of rock, one album at a time." Kind of interesting to flip through, especially if you're a record hound who loves to scour used bins looking for vinyl treasures.

CRYING CLOWN #2 (PO Box 263, Yarmouthport MA 02675 - \$1) An interview with goth rocker The Prophetess and a piece about the reunited Ghoul Squad cap this mini-zine, which also includes some short stories, poems, and reviews.

DAMn! #11(5 Franklin Blvd. Somerset NJ 08873; email damnet@aol.com, \$1) Mick Hale's cyber-techno-electro-whatchamacallit zine. Future Sound of London and Meat Beat Manifesto get

interviewed this ish, along with an extremely confrontational email chat with Paul Abramson of Van Richter Records. The reviews bring you up to date on all the latest trance, ambient, techno, &tc.

DEEZ NUTS #4 (1029 Eglon Ct., Merrick NY 11566 - \$1) My favorite zine format is a legal-sized page (8 1/2 x 14") turned sideways. It makes an almost square page and you can do a lot with the layouts. This is one of those slapped-together punk zines with a lot of clip art and little stories and rants all jumbled together. The piece about going to see Shelter (along with various observations on Mr. Ray Cappel) gets an A+.

DOGPRINT #8 (PO Box 84, Suffern NY 10901; email lmi-care@ramapo.edu - \$2) Raging newsprint punkzine with some great photos, scene reports, reviews, and interviews with Norm (from Anti Matter zine and now Texas Is The Reason,) Shift, Tilt, Automatic 7, Ignite, Trial, and more.

ETCH Vol. 2 No. 4 (PO Box 10132, Lansing MI 48901; email etch96@aol.com - \$1) Here's a really eclectic music zine - everything from midwestern white-boy rapper Kid Rock to Lower East Side trendoid Coyote Shivers. Well written too. Sizable reviews section (including 7 inches and demo tapes) and a Detroit-region concert calendar.

EYE #9 (301 S. Elm Street #405, Greensboro NC 27401; email eye@nr.infi.net \$3.50) Eye continues its penetrating coverage of trash culture and pop music in a new, bigger format. Ever wonder what satanist Anton LaVey's favorite horror movies were? Or how those pyramid scams that bilk people out of their money work? How about censoring the Internet? Does it work? All those answers and lots more weird & cool stuff in this issue.

THE FLASHING ASTONISHER #8 (Gregg, 113 Fleetwood Lane, Minoa NY 13116; email gcjohnso@mailbox.syr.edu - \$2) "Syracuse is the most heavenly city on earth," writes editor Gregg, "that is, if heaven is a snowy, polluted, wet boring piece of offal where the angels only stop off for a Utica Club beer on their way to a much less snowier hell." So maybe it's not surprising that issue #8 includes a list of "the best places to masturbate," recipes for pot brownies and making your own absinthe, and a cartoon about a guy who advertises for a missing dog's head. Huh? See for yourself.

GEEKCORE #2 (PO Box 9146, Denver CO 80209 - \$1) Short dollops of post-adolescent angst and a well-done reviews section. Nice looking mini-zine with a talented staff.

IT'S ALIVE #15 (PO Box 6326, Oxnard CA 93031; \$2) Nardcore is alive & well and Fred Hammer is busy telling us about it. The new It's Alive includes features on old-timers Ill Repute, Philly's Rain On The Parade, Strife, and IA's specialty, excellent live band photos of hardcore and sXe bands.

MUDDLE #9 (PO Box 621, Ithaca NY 14851; email dbrown4@ic3.ithaca.edu - \$1) Way cool punkzine by our own Dave Thirsty and his college pals. This ish reflects Dave's changing taste from pop-punk to emo, with features on Lifetime, Down By Law, Promise Ring, Chamberlain, Silent Majority, Project Kate, and lots more, plus lots of good photos, columns, rants, reviews, & Internet stuff.

NO LABELS #3 (\$4 from 1148 5th Ave., #7d, NY, NY 10128) This will be a year old by the time you read about it in JB, but... from what I gather the editor Mike Thomas is just recently out of high school, yet this is a quality offset legal foldover size w/color cover. Heavy straight edge influence with some metal crossover. Interviews w/ Snapcase, Coalesce, Gavin Oglesby. Even if Mike is annoyed with the anti Grateful Dead/Jerry Garcia attitude of punks (I for one hated them both) this is still good. -Tom B.

NO RULES FUNZINE #6 (Matt, 168 Park Ave., Leonia NJ 07606 - one stamp) You can't beat the price, anyway. Snippets of teenage angst, newspaper article reprints (which show how dumb grownups can be,) a thing about favorite toys, and some reviews.

NUMBER TWO #8 (PO Box 1764, NYC 10009; email workit2@earthlink.net) Wow! The new No. 2 is a huge double-issue that comes in a brown paper bag. Although I found some of the more academic essays a bit long-winded, the interviews are top-notch as always (and there are tons of them - VSS, Unwound, The Van Pelt, Side Show, Dura Delinquent, Karate, Gastr Del Sol, Girls Vs. Boys, and more), as are the reviews, layouts, and photos. Plenty of bang for your buck with this baby.

O2 #2 (Open Communications, 429 Timber Lane, Devon PA 19333; email 02site@aol.com - \$3.50) At \$3.50 a pop, this is a little pricey, but it's a nicely done, with a glossy cover and bright offset printing on heavy stock. O2 is a bit different from most of the zines we review in that its focus isn't music but outdoor sports, covering the Delaware Valley and parts of NJ. So if you're looking for a place to race mountain bikes, compete in a triathlon, run a marathon, or just go boogie boarding, this is the place to look.

OCULUS Vol. 5, No. 6 (PO Box 148, Hoboken NJ 07030; email info@oculus.com - \$2, or \$5 for 6 issues) They give this away free

at Maxwells so I'm always among the first to pick up a new issue. Besides the well-written and selective reviews, there's a chat with Wake Ooloo (ex-Feelies Glenn Mercer and Dave Weckerman's band,) a funny look at extraterrestrial surf-rockers Man... Or Astro-man?, NJ locals Play Trains, and more. Intellectual without being snotty about it, Oculus is always a fine read.



PATHETIC LIFE #25 (\$3 cash from Doug Holland, 537 Jones St., #2386, San Francisco, CA 94102) This 1/2 size zine bills itself as "Diary of a Fat Slob." I just loved this, tales of losers, outcasts, and all sorts of malcontents. Doug deals with all sorts of assholes one encounters in life: religious zealots, store security nazis and assorted idiots who try to track him down and intrude on his privacy. Doug (a pseudonym) says he's rude, antisocial and just wants to be left alone. If you read in between the lines, though, you can see glimpses of humanity, caring and humor. (hope that doesn't piss you off, Doug - but even I have to admit that life doesn't always suck). -Tom B.

POPWATCH #8 (PO Box 440215, Somerville MA 02144 - \$3.95) This thing is so hefty it feels more like a paperback book than a zine, and about half of it is reviews. Some fine writing by Les Scurry and others, who interview Jim O'Rourke (one of my "25 Most Important People In Indie Rock" piece in Request; glad someone agrees with me!), Railroad Jerk, James McNew (of Yo La Tengo) on his side project, Dump, and kiwi experimentalist Dean Roberts. Popwatch will push you beyond your usual menu of easy-to-find indie rock and punk, and that's a good thing.

PUNK PLANET #17 (Box 464, Chicago IL 60690, \$2) It's funny. MRR seems to become more unreadable every issue while Punk Planet, now in its third year, just keeps getting better & better. (Please keep in mind I do some reviews for PP so I'm obviously biased, but still...) Issue #17 spans the generations - chats with the Descendents, Dan O'Mahoney, Snapcase, and Rye Coalition, helpful DIY hints, a long scholarly essay on punk and economics, tons of reviews, the usual columns, and some of the sharpest layouts you'll see anywhere.

QUADROCEPTIVE INFINITATION #1 (Lewis Houston, RR1 Box 1168, Nescopeck PA 18635 - \$1) Anytime I see a zine with a RR

address, I think, wow, how cool. Here's a kid out in the middle of nowhere putting together a zine. That said, I could really do without the childish scrawl drawings (there's some decent original artwork here too,) and the writing's kind of weak. (A Bad Religion review by the editor, reprinted from his school paper, shows that he's clearly capable of better work.) I sound like a schoolteacher grading someone's homework but this really could've been a lot better.

RAG HAG #1 (Martinez, PO Box 51538, Light House Point FL 33074; \$1) I wouldn't be so bold as to label any zine "For women only," but this one comes pretty close, since most of it concerns how to make your own environmentally-sound menstrual pads instead of using store-bought tampons. The editor also runs a "pro-girl/all wimmin" zine distro service, which grrl-friendly guys might find of interest.

RAZOR BLADES IN HALLOWEEN CANDY Feb. '97 (53 Hudson Ave., Grafton MA 01519; email rbsaancho@aol.com - \$1) Mostly fiction and some short essays, plus reviews. While it's not much to look at, there's a lot of enthusiasm in the writing, especially the reviews, and the short stories were all entertaining. For the record, this is "The evil fuzzy peanut attacks an average Japanese city" issue.

SCREED #7 (PO Box 9254, Cincinnati OH 45209; email dr13@one.net - \$1) Every town should have a fanzine that covers its local scene; most don't, Cincinnati does. This ish of Screed introduces a few new Cincy bands (26 Letters, Mulch, the Socials, the Da Va Men,) and a few more established ones. There's an advice column on keeping a band together, some tips on things to do in town, and a reviews section. Any band touring through Ohio might want to get in touch.

SCUM FEAST #3 (206 Prospect Ave., Raleigh NC 27603; \$1) Sloppy, old-school (i.e. typewritten, xeroxed, and pasted together with all kinds of clip art) punk zine. They talk to the Spent Idols,

Gardy-Loo, the Mentors (!) and the O.J. Symptoms, plus a special report on homophobia in North Carolina. Altho I hate xeroxed photos, I love the sense of humor in this zine.

SHREDDING MATERIAL #10 (2515 Biddle Road, Middletown MD 21769; email mskf79c@prodigy.com - \$2) Nice-looking offset zine on heavy white stock, so your hands don't get all smeary. Interviews with the Melvins, Sicko, Chune, Gameface, Stanford Prison Experiment, New Sweet Breath, Clairmel, "The Shredding Times" (with some funny rants, news, and Internet tips,) and a piece about getting the most out of a music conference (like SXSW or CMJ Marathon.)

SOUND VIEWS #44 (96 Henry St. #5w, Brooklyn NY 11201; email soundviews@aol.com - \$2) The first issue of 1997 announces that SV will continue its policy of covering only NY-area bands, and I couldn't be happier. With the dearth of mainstream press available to NY bands, Sound Views is a vital part of the scene here. This issue includes Brutal Truth, the Skatalites, Stillsuit (who talk about signing to Don Fury's new label, a subsidiary of TVT,) Bliss Blood, the best records of '96, and the usual columns and reviews.

TAIL SPINS #28 (PO Box 1860, Evanston IL 60204; email tail-spin@interaccess.com - \$3) This is one zine that's liable to write about anything. This issue includes real-life ghost stories, a piece about the Titanic, an interview with Dave Dictor of MDC, and plenty of reviews. Always worth checking out.

THICKER #5 (PO Box 882283, San Francisco CA 94188; email 72154.3657 @compuserve.com) "No humans were paid in the making of this zine," it says on the title page. Gotta love it. Thicker's a great-looking offset zine that primarily covers indie rock. This issue has The Daviess County Panthers, Geeza X talking about the birth of punk, the controversial Frogs (who get a chance to try and explain themselves, although I still don't buy their act,) Nomeansno, the Grifters, James Kochalka Superstar interviewing underground comics artist Rick Veitch, and tons more.

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TROUBLE BOUND #5 (Phil Kellum, 8334 Alden Rd., Lenexa KS 66215 - \$1) Given the huge underground following for ska, I've always wondered why there weren't more ska zines. Well, here's a good one, with lots of interviews, reviews, and some good photos. Scofflaws, Slackers, Skinnerbox, Bouncing Souls, Pietasters, Stubborn All Stars, and Downset (well, it's *mostly* ska.)

U-DIRECT #9 (P.O. Box 476617, Chicago, IL 60647, \$3) An intriguing publication. On newsprint but definitely a zine, it contains some cool articles, some reprints, and a bunch of reviews. Also a bunch of poetry. They print their willingness to ship stuff to people to review (does that apply to Canadians, I wonder?) and print a couple of letters. The reviews are in very tiny print but well done. Quite a range of articles in issue #9, which is from way back in Sept. A sad story about interracial love and the absurdity of life some years ago. A powerful tale about abortions, a powerful look at family values, and a compelling look at violence and how to deal with it. - Rodney L.

UNDER THE VOLCANO #36 (PO Box 236, Nesconset NY 11767 - \$2) Always a nice balance of hard 'n' noisy national bands and Long Island coverage. This time around you get Firewater, Godflesh, skasters The Insteps, Neurosis, a profile of Ringing Ear Records (yeah! support indie rock!) and lots of reviews, including some columns on everything from duck hunting to LI hardcore.

UNDERGROUND ZINE SCENE (John Ridge, 316 E Main St., Sebawaing MI 48759 - \$2) Now that Factsheet 5 only seems to come out with every visit of Haley's Comet, it's nice to have other zines that serve as a resource for fanzine fiends like me. Under-

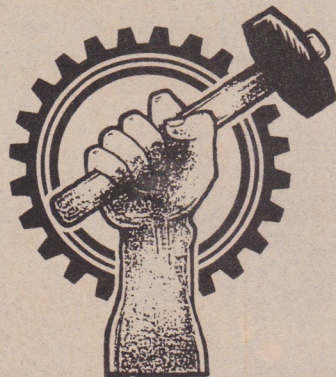
ground Zine Scene is just that - nothing but hundreds of zine reviews from around the world. The latest issue also includes a "How To" column on promoting your demo tape.

YAKUZA (\$8.95 w/CD from POE 26039, Wilmington, DE 19899-6039) "Inspired by Punk Rock and Travel since 1992." Worth the \$ because of the CD that comes with it (Zen Guerilla, Caterpillar, Cotillion and others) All over the place with Moroccan travel/music report, a story about a dying dog, Caterpillar tour diary, fiction by Tom Cappodano and Nicole Panter, DIY filmmakers of the 90s and natural health cures. - Tom B.

YOU COULD DO WORSE #7 (PO Box 74647, Cedar Rapids IA; email ycdworse@aol.com; \$3.50) Editor Rob reports that he and his significant other have bought a house and are expecting a baby, he's developing a little tinnitus (that persistent ringing in the ear caused by exposure to loud sounds - wear earplugs, kids!), and understandably, money is a little tighter around their household. So they can be forgiven for getting this issue out a few months late. This time around, YCDW brings you interviews with Smart Went Crazy, Versus, the Sugarplastic, Ida, Boyracer, and Silkworm, some original fiction, a report on what it's like to shoot a rock video, and a huge reviews section.

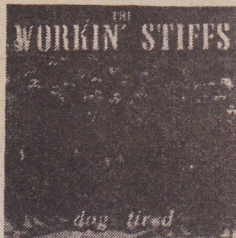
ZUZU'S PETALS #2 (Guy Gonzalez, 155 Magnolia Ave. #9, Jersey City NJ 07306; email anomalous@compuserve.com - \$1) Short fiction, poetry, and essays. Very collegiate.

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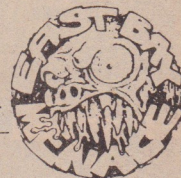
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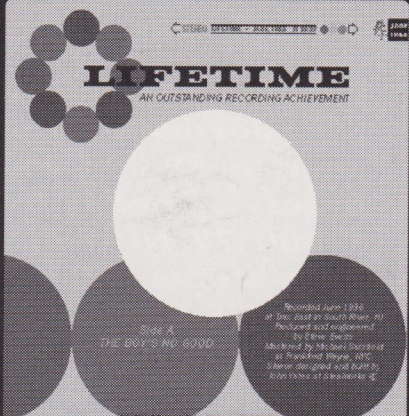


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